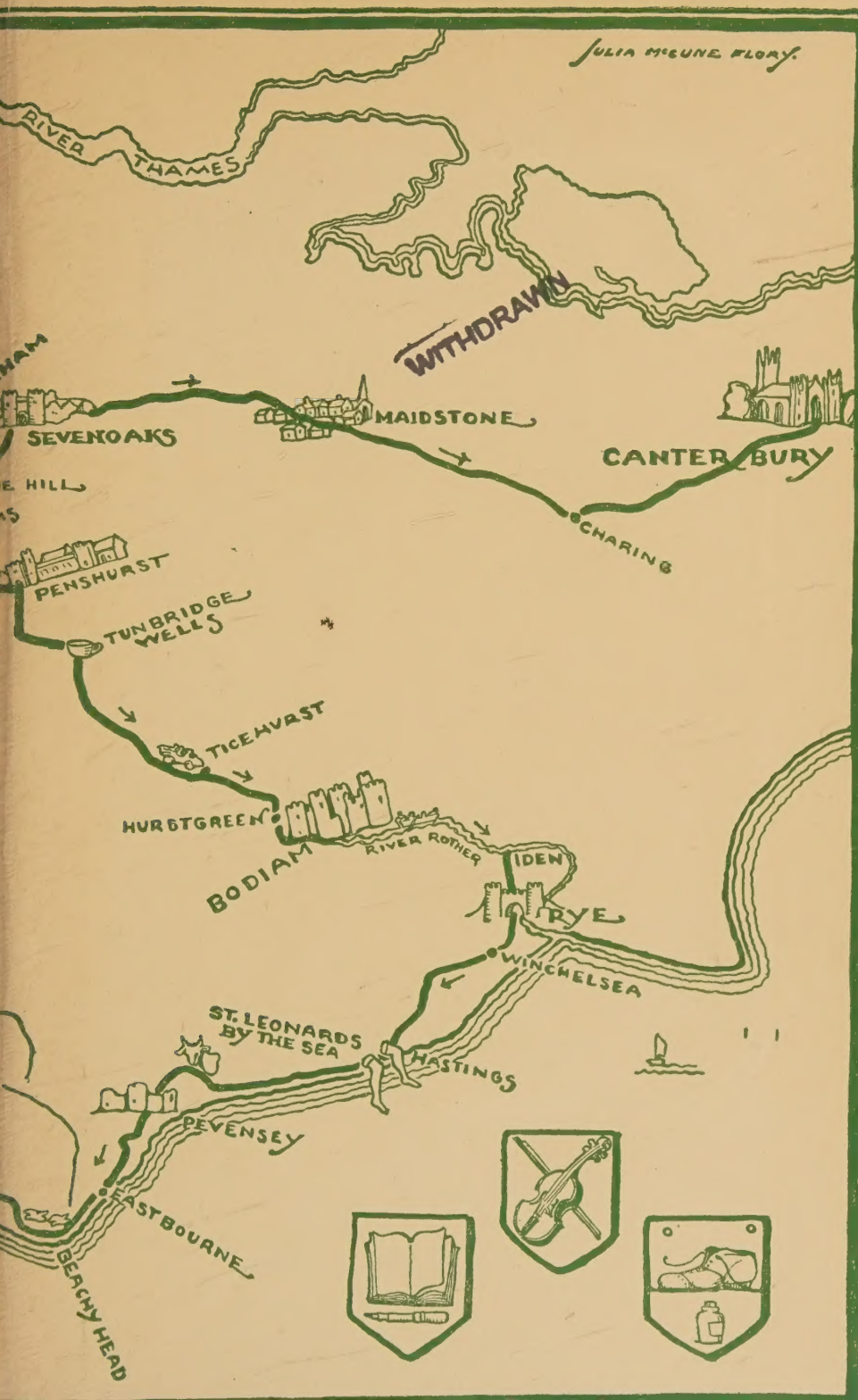
LONDON
DEPTFO
BRO
GUILDFORD
SHALFORD
SHERE
THE SILENT POOL
DORKING
REIGATE
RED HILL
GODALMING
LEITH HILL
CHIDDING ST
HINDHEAD
HILL
HASLEMERE
BLACKDOWN HILL
FERNHURST
LODSWORTH
MIDHURST
SOUTH DOWNS
WASHINGTON
AMBERLY
GOODWOOD
DEVIL'S DYKE
STEYNING
ARUNDEL
CHICHESTER
RIVER OUSE
WORTHING
LITTLEHAMPTON
BRIGHTON


JULIA McEUNE FLORY.
RIVER THAMES
WITHDRAWN
SEVENOAKS
MAIDSTONE
CANTERBURY
CHARING
PENSHURST
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
TICEHURST
HURSTGREEN
BODIAM
RIVER ROTHER
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EASTBOURNE
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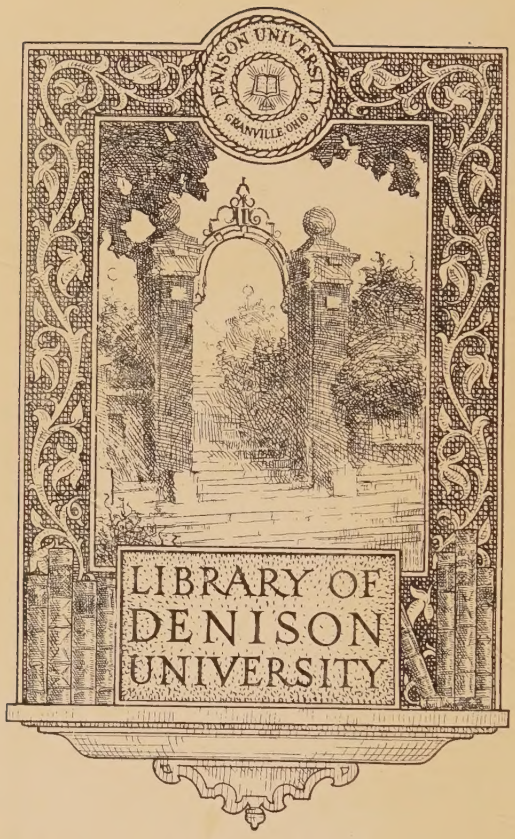
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Roundabout to Canterbury

BY CHARLES S. BROOKS

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LUCA SARTO, 1920

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LUCA SARTO, A PLAY, 1924
LIKE SUMMER'S CLOUD, 1925
ROUNDABOUT TO CANTERBURY, 1926

We . . . told one another of our national defects and perversities

Roundabout to Canterbury

BY

Charles S. Brooks

WITH PICTURES BY

Julia McCune Flory

78895

New York
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I dedicate this book to
William Saal and James C. Brooks, Jr.
with apologies for the
liberties that I have taken.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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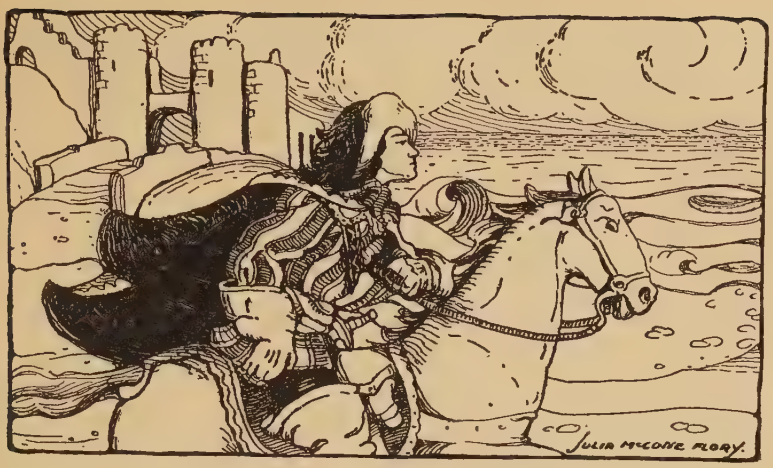
Roundabout to Canterbury



The fashion in every tale of high adventure

CHAPTER I

WE START ON A BUS TOP

IT was hard on noon of the sixteenth day of July, that two men and a boy might have been seen walking rapidly up the Strand from Charing Cross to Waterloo; for I choose to start in the solitary horseman style, as was once the fashion in every tale of high adventure.

Several thousand pedestrians might have observed, if they had been so curious, that each of these three swung a rucksack at his side; that each wore, as his whim dictated, an outing suit; that each head, against the law of London and the Magna Carta, was surmounted by a cap. If any of these thousand pedestrians, not to mention their lazy brethren who jolted on bus tops to the city—if anyone, I repeat, had been so rude as to have peeped within the strange bulging

of the rucksacks he would have discovered, not as you might think a kit of burglar's tools, but in each a change of linen, the morning tackle of ablution, a quantity of ordnance maps, a book for easy reading on the elbow, a bottle of powder for the boots. And in one bag he would have found an itinerant drug store, of which more presently when these three have need of ointment.

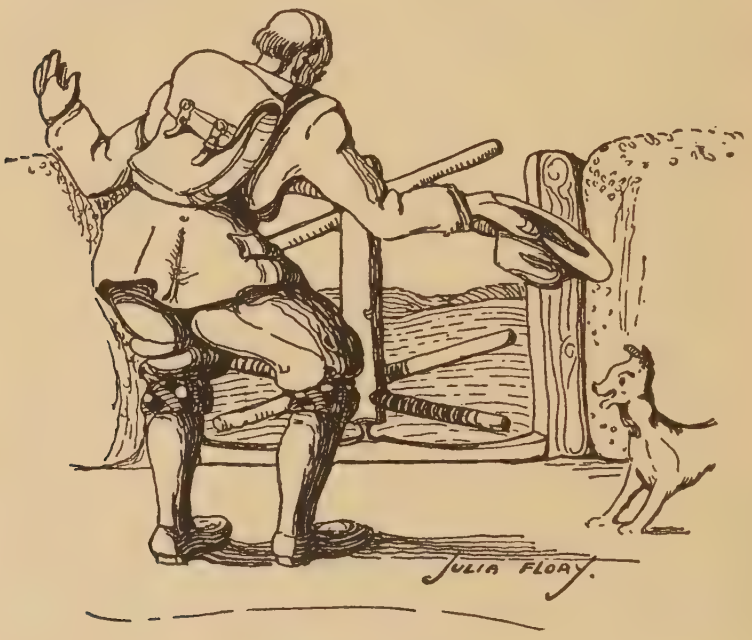
Evidently they went their way unnoticed, for vainly I have searched the contemporary press in its columns of scandal, accident and murder. And I fancy that even on that memorable day when Drake sailed from hereabouts to explore the circuit of the world there were folk as sullen on the streets, so absorbed in the penny profit of their shops that they did not know what mighty business was afoot. Were the wharves of Palos crowded? Did a shout fetch the sluggards to a window when Cabot sailed?

So in equal neglect our travelers tread the Strand, which is again adventure's port. Are they off to the icy regions of the pole? Let's ease the strain upon the curious readers who have spent their money to our advantage, although it is but a paltry ten per cent because of the greed of publishers. Even to those mercenary folk who borrow books and keep us hungry in an attic we shall show our mercy. How do they think that authors live when books are so cheaply passed about? They tell us that they have plucked us from a public library; they lend us round among their friends, and expect our thanks. The royalty from a purchased copy leaves nothing from a sandwich, and

shall we dine on less? These three travelers, then, seek a bus at Waterloo to bear them southward out of London, and where the bus shall climb a hill beyond the last uproar of the city they will descend, bind the rucksacks on their backs and tread roundabout the roads of Surrey, Kent and Sussex until at last they come to Canterbury. To Drake the cannibals and the anthropopagi! These three are determined on adventure among the bacon-eaters of southern England.

The first is known as Bill. On this morning of July sixteenth he wears gray flannel trousers with such other suitable garments inside and above as keep him modest. His boots, although they make a fine appearance in sedentary hours, are villains that scheme to overthrow him. Bill is a musician, with a studio, a grand piano and fair pupils who reach high C without a strain upon the buttons. In his lazy days he has a thirst for Guinness stout and at Haslemere he will recount the flowing gallons of his student days, with results. Nothing more inspiringly pathetic exists than his pilgrimage once to the brewery at Dublin to behold what he considers to be a second and more potent Font of Youth. You can see him standing hat in hand on a jaunting car, as one of different devotion might pass the shrine of Francis. He is the soul of generosity. Fifty idlers on the way will drink at his expense, a hundred children reach within his pocket for a lollipop. Weary, he will cry out "Oh, my soul!" and sit down abruptly by the road, once upon a thistle. Always he is of pleasant temper and ready to see the humor of a mishap. He is quick of eye toward the detail of English life—not the

obvious alone, but the trifles that mark a foreign people, the commonplace that escapes so many travelers. If any shrewdness shows upon these pages, it is likely that the hint was his. Each night and morning he putters with lotions from his wandering drug store.



He is polite to dogs

The second of these men is a youth who is slipping rapidly through his forties and his last remaining hair. His is a head that needs a brush but not a comb, for the central tangle is cleared away. He wears a golf suit but it is merely pretense, for he hooks and slices. He carries two nonleakable fountain pens that leak within his pocket. Or is this their protest that he holds

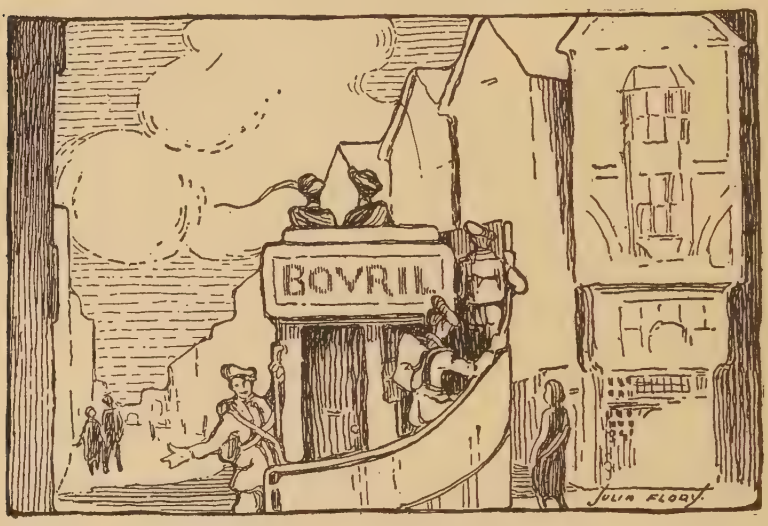
them idle, for they are the symbol of his profession? He is polite to dogs and to all strange cattle that seem of a dirty disposition and have hooks in front.

The third of our travelers is a young man of seventeen years who at home squeaks on a violin but has a soul to be a Kreisler. His zeal is large for music, and from morn to eve he will discourse of Galli-Curci. His prized possessions are signed photographs of the opera singers, for he writes them pleading notes with a stamp inclosed. But his baser self is always hungry and he has room aboard—a hollow leg, perhaps—for six square meals a day. In any lapse of the Götterdämmerung he will inquire whether it is time to eat. There is to be a shock for the waitresses of southern England and many a pretty face will turn pale as it trots for extra beef and mutton. Bill orders a dessert but shoves it on to him. This young man's name is Jimmie, but he is known at school as Beezer or sometimes vulgarly as Simpleberry. Bill and Beezer will talk for hours of music—high stuff like the Ring and Parsifal—until the young man with the nonleakable fountain pens is forced to stuff his ears.

And now these three are seated on a bus top that owes its strength to Bovril. Need I explain? Every signboard sings its praise—a spoonful night and morning for the shaking legs of convalescence. In which hymn of praise the London busses join, at usual rates.

Behind our travelers stands the Adelphi Terrace where Garrick died and Bernard Shaw lives. Upstream rise the towers of Parliament with Big Ben booming out the noon. Beneath them is the temporary

structure that serves during the repairs of Waterloo, and lower still the Thames runs to the ocean with the tide in quest of its own adventure. Bovril wheezes into motion stiff of joint, as if today, alas, it had neglected its steaming spoon. There is a burst of song from the forward seats and the trip has started.



Bovril wheezes into motion stiff of joint

"Hojotoho! Heiaha!" This from Bill with waving arms, in the manner of a Valkyr mounting to Valhalla.

"Hojotoho! Heiaha!" An echo from Beezer.

"Don't be an ass!" My own contribution.

If now you own a map of the general bus lines of London and will trace with your finger the route that Bovril took you will see that Bill, Beezer and myself sped out past the Elephant and Castle (a tavern, dear innocent) and along the New Kent Road and other

streets to Deptford—a deep ford once across the Ravensbourne, a stream which joined the Thames. It was in a Deptford tavern that Christopher Marlowe was killed in a brawl, and we saw many taverns that looked as if they competed for the honor and still lived in the high tradition. There were masts of shipping, too, at the foot of every street and warehouses to store the product of the seven seas. This is the center for a thousand routes of freight that spin the web of empire.

Here we steered south through crowded ways to Lewisham and were let down, as the English say, at the end of the bus line. We had traversed the high streets of many towns all within the city.

"How did it happen" asked Bill, "that so many towns came together?"

"I think" said Beezer, "that they were lonesome in the country and crowded in for movies and excitement."

"Excellent, Rollo," I replied. "And now will you tell me how anyone can be sure of knowing his own house on such monotonous streets where all doorways seem the same. You'd think that a man would have to try his key a dozen times before he found a lock to fit. A wrong nightcap might greet him with a candle on the stairs."

"It is the rubber plant" said Bill, "that restores a husband to his wife—its exact position against the curtain. The natives become very clever at recognizing their own rubber plants. It's a wise father who knows his own—"

"It is," I interrupted. "The monstrous progeny of rubber plants must always be a mystery."

"I myself" said Bill, "prefer the aspidistra."

"And what is that?" I asked.

"Anon!" he answered. "Of it we shall see much upon our travels."

"I have perused many books of England," I replied. "Of thatched roofs and half-timbering I know much. I am steeped in perpendicular and lancet, but no author has informed me of the aspidistra."

"That is the fault of travelers," said Bill. "They will not demean themselves to vulgar things. The habitat of the aspidistra is the front window of a boarding house; for, although it is found sometimes in the dwellings of the rich, it flourishes best on a shabby sill. Each year it puts forth a crop of leaves to be distinguished by a thinner coating of dust, and in the market it sells at a shilling for each of this fresher crop. Three clean leaves, three shillings! Am I clear?"

"Preserve these facts, Rollo," I replied, "and as we go along name for practice the price of these plants that decorate the street. It's the old problem of the herrings. If six and a half cost—you know—what will?—you get me."

"The three-legged easel and the crayon portrait of grandfather," continued Bill, "also found in English boarding houses, are other matters to which I have given study."

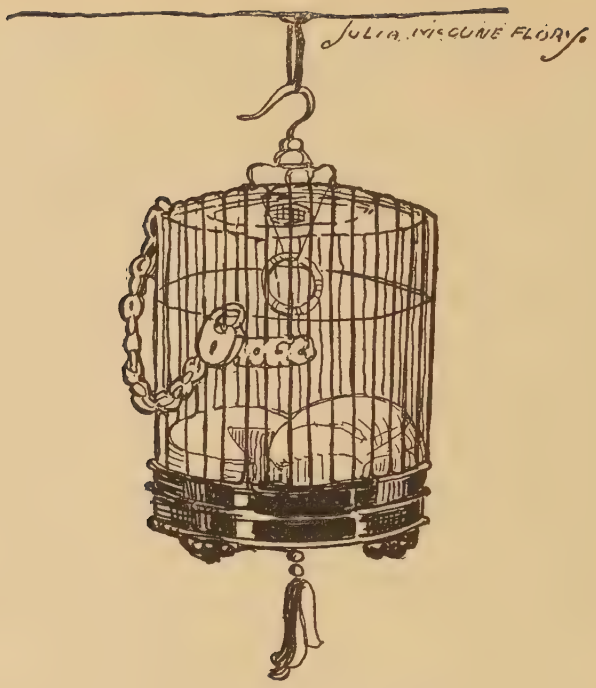
"Shall we meet them on our travels?" I asked.

"I know" Bill persisted, "many varieties of *God Bless Our Home*—sometimes in water colors, sometimes designed in dyed chicken feathers, but always found on parlor walls."

"One lesson is enough," I answered. "We must not burden Beezer."

As we were still in the uproar of London we mounted another bus, also known as Bovril, also without its steaming spoon, which presently rattled off through Bromley.

And Keston was next and other villages, until in good time somewhat of the noise fell off behind and fields opened up between the houses. Once, also, we caught a glimpse of a smiling valley with sheep upon the hills and in the misty distance the roof of the Crystal Palace with the smudge of London low down against the north.



But these, also, had been chained

CHAPTER II

HOJOTOHO! HEIAHA!

IT was after two o'clock when we climbed to the top of Westerham Hill, and here our bus sat back upon its haunches with a determination that showed even to the stupid that under no persuasion would it go farther.

"At last!" cried Bill. "Here is where the roads of England start. World, I am coming!" And he arose, waved his arms and skipped lightly down the steps.

But there was a tavern handy and in order that the

trip might begin with proper ceremony we ordered bitter beer and pledged one another. An inch or so for Beezer, who would have preferred an ice cream soda. Then, strapping on our rucksacks, we journeyed off afoot.

A sharp pitch leads downward from Westerham Hill and on its brow we discovered a public house which seemed to offer the promise of lunch. But an old gentleman who answered to our knock informed us that the cook had gone to town and that the fire was out.

"How about a cold joint?" I asked.

"That's the trouble," the man replied. "There is a joint in the pantry to be sure, but the key is turned upon it."

"Bread and cheese," persisted Bill. But these, also, had been chained.

Behind the public house there was a curious mound which I thought might conceal a gun emplacement, but the old fellow could give us no information. Man and boy and all that sort of thing, but it had never occurred to him to inquire. At my question he repeated only that the cook had gone to town, and rheumy matter trickled from his eyes. He was bent upon his cane with clammy living and his wit was as sluggish as his legs. The ordnance map shows a rifle range below the hill, so it is likely that my guess was right. Perhaps in nineteen fourteen a gun had been put there to guard the London highway. The man with the watery eyes shut the door in hard finality and we turned away.

Presently on the slope we crossed the Pilgrims' Way

which is here sunk to the semblance of a farmyard lane, a vagrant ribbon cut in the facing of the hills. But though it is a path which three fat cows might block from wall to wall and runs in the lazy curve of easiest level it is the most famous of all the roads of England.

I hinted so much to Bill.

"Let's lie down upon the grass," he answered. "I listen better so."

Its present name arose in early modern times when a stream of pilgrims caught with holy zeal journeyed from the west to lay their worship at the shrine of Thomas Becket. Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in disagreement with his King whether the Church should play a second fiddle to the State, had been murdered December twenty-ninth, eleven hundred and seventy, on the steps of his altar in the twilight; and almost at once a Great Pilgrimage set out for Canterbury to protest against the sacrilege.

For fifty years the anniversary of his death was precisely kept, and men toiled eastward on slippery winter roads. Then the seventh of July, the day of St. Thomas's translation, was marked for a second feast; for the hardships of winter were too sharp and it was thought expedient to add a summer month for pilgrimage. And the habit of pious journey grew until each season of the year possessed its special festival to crowd the road. It was in spring that Chaucer launched his pilgrims from the Tabard Inn in Southwark down the valley of the Thames, and April must have continued a favorite month when all the countryside was green.

Men toiled eastward on slippery winter roads

"Probably restlessness," said Bill. "I feel that way myself in spring."

"Yet these," I continued, "were but upstart years that hardly fringe upon the road's antiquity."

"May's the hardest month," persisted Bill, "the first warm days. Young ladies reaching for high notes.

Morning 's at seven! That kind of thing. I wish there were shrines in the middle west."

"Lie down," I said. "I am instructing Beezer."

Centuries before the death of Becket this was the general artery from the plains of Hampshire to Canterbury and the narrow seas where commerce and civilization crossed from France. It lay ready, earlier still, for the armies of the Normans, for the Danish and Saxon conquests; and Aylesford was fought upon its edge. Such Vikings as sailed south and beached their ships in the shallow rivers of the Channel used it for their invasion. The Romans found it ready-made and when their legions pounded up its chalky dust they were travelers on the path of their predecessors. More remotely the Phœnicians discovered the tin mines of Cornwall and this was their road of commerce on which mules bore treasure to the east. When Stonehenge was first built this was the path to its windy plain. Here the ancient Britons went back and forth before the use of tin or iron was known. Shortly on our travels, when our course once more touches on the Way, we shall see a pit where stone knives and hatchets have been lately dug. Science, in default of date, has placed these in the neolithic age; but the large word only conceals its ignorance in which of many thousand years these implements were chipped and sharpened. These things grow dizzy to a layman, for they run countless generations before Noah's paltry flood.

"You are sure of all this?" asked Bill.

"I am," I replied. "I cribbed it from a book."

"I guessed as much," retorted Bill.

"And now" I continued, "what are the conditions that determine the placing of an ancient road?"

"That's what I want to hear," said Bill, rolling to his other elbow, "but make it short. If I shut my eyes, don't think that I'm asleep."

Hilaire Belloc has written a book on this same Way along the northern downs and he has many facts and theories. A mountain range, he says, does not so block communication as does marshy land; and therefore an early road will keep always to the hills. As storms are sharpest at the top, it will stay halfway to the summit, and it will choose a southern slope because its surface dries most quickly in the spring. Not only are marshes usual in valleys, but in thick woods a path is lost and a traveler finds it hard to keep direction. In the valleys, too, the rivers are difficult to cross but they can be managed on their upper course. So generally an early road will seek a range of hills. If a watershed must be crossed, a route will be found along an upward stream and then, with a climb at the top, a downward stream be sought. Moreover a range of hills often shows at the morning start a destination for the night and, even if the intermediate path be blurred, the range is guide. And so from Canterbury to Winchester the old road follows the southern slope of the northern downs above the wooded confusion of the Weald, and all through the centuries before man was civilized this was the line of progress from east to west. But now it has sunk to farmyard use and cattle nibble at the grass.

"It's about time for food," said Beezer.

"Quite right, Rollo," I replied. "Though a man

should not live to eat, it is proper that he eat to live. Cherish these lessons as we go along."

It was hereabouts that we had our first view of Westerham. A valley lies between parallel hills north and south. I cannot think that they overtop the lowland by many hundred feet, but beauty carries no yardstick for its measure. The sides are of gradual slope, and bear crops and pasture to the summit.

"At school," said Beezer, "one of the boys wrote 'It was a broad valley and hills slopped up both sides.'"

"I'll warrant he got a low mark for that."

"That wasn't so bad as what another fellow wrote 'She was the boniest lass in all Scotland.'"

And so we beguiled the way.

In this valley yellow grain is varied by the deep green of woodland. Here and there a tower shows where a village is buried in the trees and the roads run up and down with a friendly leisure as if clocks were things unknown. It is a land of sunlight and shadow, and even the rudest winds of winter must visit here with gentler purpose. For a tempest plays its pranks upon the hills, but comes at a sober gait to the shelter of the lowland.

And just as the Pilgrims' Way marks through all antiquity the course to the southeast English Channel, so in our later times the present motor highway lies parallel across the valley and guides the rushing traffic to Canterbury and Dover. I wonder whether sometimes in the dusk of twilight when the night brings on its silence—I wonder whether these two roads do not call to one another across the fields and boast of their rival pageantry.

On the valley's farther slope stood Westerham with a church tower to mark it against the hill, and this was our objective for the night.

"How far have we gone?" asked Beezer.

"Three miles at most," I answered.

"It's four o'clock," he persisted, "and I am precious hungry."

So we inquired at the Post Office and were directed to a turning and the King's Arms Hotel, which stands in the village square. We fumbled through hallways until we found the landlady in a snuggery where she kept her ledger. Off we threw our rucksacks.

Any cook grows sober at the hint of food between meals, but it was merely a shadow on the good nature of the cook at Westerham, and presently she laid out for us great slabs of beef and bread. We drank her health from pewter mugs of bitter beer and closed hungrily upon the food. Then while Bill and Beezer slept I went out to see the town.

There is a triangular open space in front of the King's Arms that serves as a village square. Roundabout are shops. A farther corner of this opens upon the churchyard but I followed the highroad to the right which presently drops sharply off the upper level past a decayed range of ancient buildings of sagging roof and musty front. The tiles put forth a crop of moss and waving grasses, as if sap ran up the walls thinking it to be a vegetable of a larger sort that was now in blossom.

I recall a nursery tale of a woman whose roof was thus a pasturage of hay, and the calamities that befell her

when she boosted her cow up the ladder for her supper. It is a pitiful story for, when the cow was lodged on top, the old lady was concerned lest the creature fall off. So she tied a string to a hoof and lowered it down the chimney. This string presently she wrapped around her thumb as she sat knitting in her kitchen. As long as there was no jerk she knew that her pet was safe. And the cow did fall off, and she was yanked up the chimney by her thumb where she was smothered in the soot.

I peeped in windows as I went down the hill, into tiny rooms of low ceiling and homely life, where old women already puttered around for supper and sleepy cats yawned on the sill.

At the foot of the incline where the road splits north and south there stands a house more ambitious than its neighbors. It sets back within a garden, and a bronze tablet on the wall against the street announces that this was the home of General James Wolfe from seventeen twenty-seven until thirty-eight. A greengrocer keeps a shop on the opposite corner, where a customer was trying her thumb on the tomatoes. So I stepped across for information. When I put my question all commercial operations were suspended and the shopkeeper told me that Wolfe had been born here. But at this the lady with the thumb corrected her.

It seems that on a certain afternoon of January, seventeen hundred and twenty-seven, Mrs. Wolfe went up the hill to the vicarage for a dish of tea with the Vicar's wife; and, this pleasant ceremony concluded, promptly—evidently without warning—to everyone's

consternation—in the midst of uproar—gave birth to a son. I can fancy the hot excitement. The pan of charcoal fetched to warm the sheets! The teacups overturned and spread about with half-bit muffins!

The village doctor running with his bag!

The Vicar's neglected sermon! The village doctor running with his bag! The spread of news from house to house! Even the echo of this gossip, now that two hundred years have passed, obliterated all thought of tomatoes.

"Shall I put them in your basket?" persisted the saleswoman. "A shilling to the measure!"

"What do you get for beans today?" replied her customer, but her tone was lukewarm for she dwelt in older matters.

The house where Wolfe would have been born under better management is open to the public but, although the shopkeeper had lived here all her life and had often brought vegetables to the kitchen door, she had never been inside.

I looked curiously at the vicarage as I came up the hill. It stands snugly inside a garden, dozing forgetful of the past. But I fancy that somewhere on a handy shelf are the identical cups and saucers, still used on a sunny afternoon, that served Mrs. Wolfe and the Vicar's wife.

The stuffy building of the greengrocer, shared with a dealer of antiques, is named Quebec Cottage. And there is a statue of Wolfe on the village green, with this inscription:

> With humble grief inscribe one artless stone
> And from thy matchless honors date our own.

Six young children were dancing a kind of quadrille beside the statue to the accompaniment of their own singing—a merry little tune quite broken by their panting breath. I listened but I could not catch the words. It was a pretty ceremony and it added a touch of beauty to the green. I sat quietly on a bench with back half turned lest I disturb their dance; and, if the soul of Wolfe were lingering hereabouts, he must have enjoyed it as myself that children should keep him

company. I would expect no less from a man who read the Elegy on the eve of battle.

I had often thought that the one thing needed in these peaceful villages of England was the contrasting merriment of children; that these ancient walls were a proper setting for lives that hardly looked beyond their days of April. And here, where our travels had hardly started, we had come on such a village, and the songs of children already were binding close the older centuries with jest and laughter. The world in its essence changes slowly despite the politicians, and doubtless from many of the village windows wrinkled faces looked out upon the fun and remembered how they, too, had played on summer afternoons long past. And the churchyard stands hard by where other dancing grandsires sleep.

I rested in the garden of the King's Arms. There was an easy-chair beside the tennis court and in this I sat to jot down my notes of travel. But my pen was dull with sleepy thought; so I scratched verses, for the search for rhyme and the check of measure on the fingers hold one awake.

In Surrey I sit in a garden of flowers
Where a hedge and the road are near,
And I catch the step from ages past
Of men who traveled here.

Before the days of tool and fire,
In the years of fang and claw,
Man fashioned a path from tree to cave,
For this was his nature's law.

The animals' tread was a hint at the first
From their lair to the pool they ran—;
But he broadened the trail and tramped it down,
And this was his start as man.

A path is chief of his brain's device.
It surpasses the tool or fire,
Or the sail or wheel, or the arch or plow;
For the path was the future's sire.

A village is only the crossing of roads.
A town ends a path to the sea.
And where broad ways meet and rest at night
A city shall come to be.

In Surrey I sit in a garden of flowers
Where the hedge and the road are near,
And I catch the step from ages past
Of men who traveled here.

Bill, Beezer and I had an excellent dinner with a friendly cat rubbing against our legs, and then we set out to see the church.

A socialist was haranguing the village on the green, blaming the government for its foreign treaties and the general unemployment. I could not see that anyone was much excited. A hundred persons stood about in attitudes expressing various degrees of rheumatism and loss of teeth, with children playing tag upon the outskirts. The orator looked upon the empty faces and commended the crowd for its intelligence. He said he was a man of peace and must not inflame them. But

they would record their protest, he knew, in the next election, and return labor into power. There was a slight wagging of brier pipes, but it may have been palsy. And now having worked himself to a fine excitement without any visible effect upon his stolid audience, presently he sat down. We observed an old

I wonder why old folk persist so long on the uneasy dosing of a pill

dame with lace cap upon her head who looked from the window of her corset and stocking shop, and she at least had been a Tory and Bourbon for eighty years.

Westerham Church stands in its graveyard at the edge of the green and gazes from its quiet perch across the valley. It offers so peaceful a retreat from life that

I wonder why old folk persist so long on the uneasy dosing of a pill. It is so handy to the village, so shadowed and so homelike, that one might forgive a rheumatic soul from leaning on its gate and contemplating pleasantly the snug living that it offers. If a bare bodkin ever finds excuse it is in one of these English villages where immortality is sure. This gate, too, that opens to the graveyard, is the sport of children, for it sags from their accustomed use.

The church seems largely of fourteenth century construction, with a fine carved portal and a sundial in the lawn to mark eternity for those who wait. We walked around its western end among the graves and looked out across a wall upon a rolling country where grain and pasture covered the valley with a housewife's comforter against the coming of the winter.

The evening was well advanced and a twilight peace lay on the hills. Below us on the slope was here and there a house with its supper smoke still curling upward. Children were at their games in a nearby field, with their hats strung upon a picket fence like Jesuit heads once on the pikes of London Bridge. A little girl, tied in a burlap bag, races as best she may and tumbles shouting in the grass. Another skips a rope and is hard at work on pepper. Another passes with a great bottle of water from a spring, with her thumb inside. There is the barking of a dog, the hammering of a belated carpenter. A motor speeds past on a distant highway. The smoke of a locomotive races up to London, too late already for the excitement of Leicester Square and its solicitation of painted faces. And

across all the valley a blue haze settles down, as if nature cooked hereabouts its tardy supper.

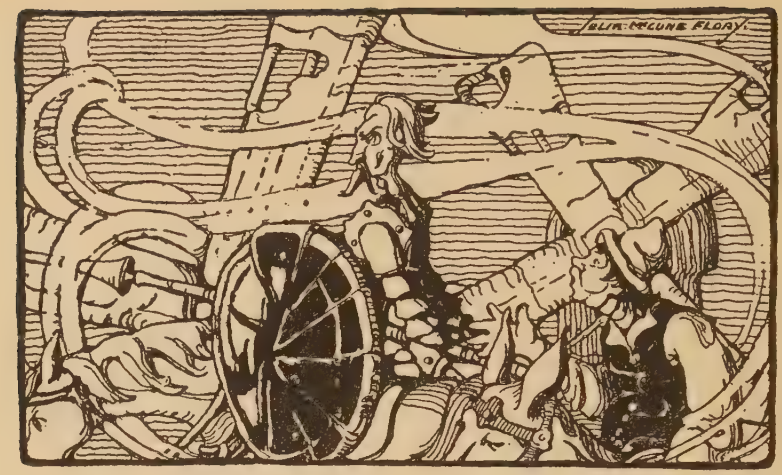
"Do you suppose there is a movie in the town?" asked Beezer.

"No, thank God!" said Bill.

"There's one next week," persisted Beezer, "I saw the notice."

"It's God's mercy." said Bill. "Next week!"

The bed in my room at the King's Arms was of a tumbled sort, all up and down in ridges, as if it were apprentice to the hills. But I fell asleep to the sound of footsteps on the village pavement.



This high adventure of a tumbled brain

CHAPTER III

THE SWARM OF MEMORY

AT the front of Don Quixote's joyous book of travel there is a picture wherein the Don is surrounded by the swarming creatures of his fancy, as he sits in his study by the fire, staring on disordered space to summon back the chaos of the past. There is more than a touch of lunacy in this hot whirl of fantastic thought that flies about his head—these windmills, giants and ladies in distress, this high adventure of a tumbled brain—, and, except for his gentleness of nature, I suspect that a heavy key would properly be turned upon him. Here he sits in meditation, while his crazy reason resounds with the tread of dreams that wander in a world of folly, the pageant of romance, the patter of scampering mischief, and below it all the sober march of melancholy thought.

And mine, like his, is a harmless lunacy that goes unwatched; for here I sit at my desk in contemplation with journey done and, gazing at the twilight of the year, I review its mild adventure—its jest and mishap, its merry hour, the sun and shadow of its prime. In this season our greener days are past; and nature, stoking now her furnace against the winter, in one universal conflagration of the hills tries vainly to lift the autumn chill.

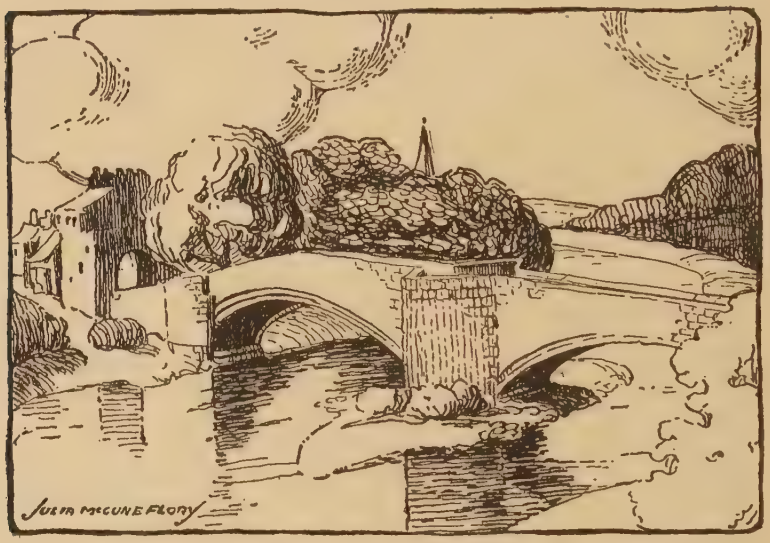
As nights grow cold our memory of June quickens into life, and the frosty storage of October preserves in recollection the moons of August and the verdure of the hills. A wind is loose tonight and in the rustling of leaves across the lawn I hear the shouts of summer, its chance and venture, its song and frolic of the night, and those sober voices, also, which lay a shadow in the pattern.

My book has started. I am home again, weaving a narrative of such matters as I recall. A beginning is the hardest, for a first chapter, like Bovril, wheezes into motion.

Through August we walked in southern England on a long path of many towns and it is my desire to capture these creatures that fly about me, to sentence them within the prison of a book. Roundabout we went from London in a great loop which the map must show, and at the end we were pilgrims on the road to Canterbury.

Can words bring back the musty smell of inns, the village streets where children romp, the appetite and thirst that end a dusty day? Can they recall the con-

tour of the hills, the wall of ancient battles, the spire that rises through the trees to lead us to the older centuries? Can the tinkle of a word recall the shallow murmur of sunny waters and build a pilgrims' bridge? Or if a paragraph shall throw its net shall a cloud be



If a paragraph shall throw its net shall a cloud be caught?

caught? Roads wander in the twilight of the mind, with grazing cattle and meadows patched in many colors. From a hilltop of the brain there stretches out the sea where ships go back and forth on smoky errand. Soft on the carpet of the woods the fancy lies and hears the melody of wind whose slim fingers strum forever in the trees. Words must be brought from common use to rear the castles of the thought. They must fetch back the laugh that escaped from the window of a tavern. Words are a galleon whose hold is piled with

treasure for such market as spends a proper coin of sympathy and understanding. Memory pours them from an inkpot and a jest is kept alive beyond its echo.

Night leans its thin black face upon the window. I whistle to the creatures of my fancy.

Night leans its thin black face upon the window

The engaging clutter in the antiquary's window

CHAPTER IV

THE MAN WITH A FLY IN HIS BEER

WE were on the road next morning shortly before ten o'clock but were stopped presently by the engaging clutter in the antiquary's window just across from General Wolfe's. The shop was locked but the owner had seen us and up he pattered for a sale. Bill has a collector's taste for old glass, so he tapped the goblets for their sound.

And now it seemed that one day several years ago a motor had halted at the antiquary's door and a gentleman with bushy hair somewhat past middle life had entered with a tinkling of the doorbell. He bought several goblets like these that stood before us, sent them to his motor with evident satisfaction and drove away. Hardly had he turned the corner when a neighbor rushed in breathless to tell him that his customer had been Lloyd George.

"Lloyd George in this very shop, sir, standing just where you are, talking to me like an equal!"

"Amazing!" said Bill.

"A dozen goblets! Twelve of them! Me tiein' them up in the Daily Mail!"

The antiquary had been a Tory, I suspect, until this encounter; but now at my challenge he confessed that his politics were shaken. In any discussion in the village pub doubtless he wavers to the Liberal camp.

During his long narration he had hooked my buttonhole, and he followed us to the sidewalk and up the street for added detail. I have myself met one or two golden persons, and I know how the old man cherished green outsiders to listen to his boast. If ever I meet Lloyd George I shall tell him that he holds safe the crossroad vote.

At the antiquary's we turned south on the highway up a long hill to Chart's Edge. In Kentish dialect a chart is a rough common overgrown with gorse and broom and heather. These commons are of a shaggier, less tamed beauty than private land. Where the growth can be digested sheep and cattle keep them nibbled close, and in their unfenced patches of brier and thistle with wayward paths upon the hills they convey a suggestion of wanton gypsy life.

A caravan of these swarthy nomads had gone through Westerham as we sat at breakfast—a very circus of red shawls and covered wagons—and it is likely that last night they were camped here upon the chart where blackened embers still remained. I had asked the waitress their means of livelihood. They tell fortunes

for a sixpence, they gain a sharp profit from the sale of a gaudy rag or shining bead; but chiefly such offers are but an excuse to linger in the chicken yard for petty theft. They seem to have abandoned the kidnaping of children for a ransom. Gypsies are frequent in the English countryside and one understands how they are a bogey to frighten children in their nursery tales. They are a strange exotic people—for the flight from Egypt seems eternal—and they weave a crimson thread across the pattern of these sober towns.

French Street lies on a lane that circles through a wood, and in my ignorance which the guidebook will not dispel, I choose to think that here settled some Huguenot who had escaped from St. Bartholomew. It is but a cluster of houses that sprouted in its youth like mushrooms in the damp shadow of the mighty trees that hang upon the hill.

Hereabouts, where our lane ended at a stable door, a tremendous dog was of a mind to eat me. He sniffed as at a platter to find the sweetest bite. I like a dog when his master is about to present me as a friend—a dog of kindly eye and wagging tail. I like him if he has the soft manners of a cat. If he possess false teeth which he guards from accident, then would I make that dog my pet. But this creature had a fixed idea against all argument that I had come to rob the stable. In vain I met him with my eye, as books advise in any conflict of the jungle. So, assuming a slinking innocent manner and sidling by with short steps to protect my heels, finally I escaped.

Here we took to a path across Toy's Hill, a woodland

climb of exquisite beauty. There is a bit of clearing at the top and, as we had walked several miles and Bill's boots were full of feet, we threw down our rucksacks for a rest. A green valley of hedge and meadow lay below us, with the towers of many villages peeping up. White clouds drifted in a depth of blue like snow-clad mountains on a journey. Had an Alp broken from its moorings in the south? Had it packed its bag for the windy steerage of the sky to seek these fields of England to rear anew its fortune?

And so we rested, with rucksacks for our pillows. Nor can I think of a finer interlude of travel than lying on one's back upon a carpet of thick moss while drowsy melodies are sounding in the trees. It is a tune that stirred the ear of prophets when first the rolling carpet of the hills was laid. It is the song that came to David as he walked among his sheep. And poets have always listened to its voice to steal the cadence for their thought. In such circumstance, if ever, peace descends upon the heart and the roar of living sinks to the shallow murmur of a runnel on the stones.

Bill's boots were off. "I'll never move again," he said. "Under the wide and starry sky, dig the grave and let me lie."

"Later," I replied. "But tonight we must make Penshurst."

Bill groaned and drew on his boots.

At the foot of the path we were back on the highroad and the next town was Four Elms. It was in the taproom, where we ran dry of lubricant, that we met the man with the fly in his beer.

These taps consist commonly of a private bar for gentlemen and a general pub for ordinary folk. There is something rather still and haughty about the private bar, so we regularly took our ease within the pub. The beer is the same, sevenpence for persons of stiffer quality and sixpence in the pub. At best the beer is thin and is hardly stronger than ours that sticks within the law, but it is of riper taste as if it had aged longer in the wood. This beer is the usual jest of the vaudeville stage and is regarded as another calamity of high taxes and the war.

A group of villagers had already assembled for their noonday drink. Bill, who is the leader in our hospitality, ordered mugs all round and we fell to talking. One of the farmers had recently been in East Anglia, which lies above us on the coast of England, and he was telling of its greater productivity than this region of his own. The talk shifted to the size of wagon that was best for a two-horse haul in stubble land.

And then a fly fell in one old gentleman's beer and had to be fetched out with his leathery thumb. A humorous look came in his shrewd eyes all meshed in wrinkles as he remarked that the fly was thirsty too and should have his share. It was but an extension of the dole.

They were friendly fellows, just as everybody was friendly whom we met on our walking trip. We found nothing but courtesy and a wish to please—easy natural manners and a deference that contrasts with the brusqueness of America. A shift of conversation to the present circumstance of England revealed a discourage-

ment of outlook that we found later to be usual through all the taproom acquaintance of our trip. Nor should a generalization made by travelers who sat in fifty sequent taverns be considered entirely superficial, when it is supported by all the contact of road and town. Here at least was opinion that came undoctored to a stranger.

"How about Canada?" I asked.

The man with the leather thumb shrugged his shoulders. "I am too old," he said. "Sammy here is of a mind to go."

It appeared from fifty taverns that all the countryside regretted its inability through age or poverty or family tie, to get out to the colonies for a chance of betterment. We were asked many times the third-class fare to Montreal, and persons of this or that vocation inquired what chance it stood in America—a typist, a policeman, a bookkeeper, a farm hand. Once a tapster put the question, but doubtless it was a jest against our prohibition. We shall run on much of this as we progress, but I group its reiterated instance here.

I do not know how far this discouragement is justified—how deep the morass through which the country labors—but the bad morale speaks against Britain's future. The government, I think, encourages emigration. The exhibition at Wembley, where the wealth of Australia and Canada is shown, seems devised to whet this desire. All day the crowds move through these buildings and they stand in meditation before the pictures of extensive grainfields.

On the dole for unemployment all industrious per-

sons seemed to be of a common mind—that it had been a necessary sop to the wolves of revolution; but that it had thrown the laboring class into disastrous laziness, that it was a cruel burden on the taxpayer and that better times would not return until it had been demolished. A housekeeper told us that she was without a cook, because the dole was equal to the current wage. And why should a servant be expected to boil an incessant potato when she might sit at ease with even payment? The dole, of course, is not intended for those who decline employment, but in a given instance mistakes are made. We were told, also,—though this may be gossip only—that a lazy painter, let us say, who could readily find work, would choose to register in another employment where jobs were scarce, and this scarcity would make him eligible to living on the dole.

It was a general opinion that America had come to a monstrous wealth on the profits of the war and that now she proved a hard creditor. Beneath a courteous speech there was shown an undercurrent of bitterness at our prosperity. I usually offered a hint that the war had not so much created our national wealth as to have revealed it to Europe which had been somewhat in ignorance hitherto of our giant resources. The press of all countries is jingoistic for a dirty profit and it is a chief factor in the continuance of ill feeling between nations. Why are evening sheets yellower than those we read at breakfast? Those of London always have their tongue in their cheeks at any news from across the ocean. They feed on scandal from America where supply is large. They stress the ignorance of tourists.

Never, I think, except in the fever of the war when our troops were landing, has England in its heart been so friendly to America; for it is friendly even when instructed in our violence, our stupidity, our greed, our raw manners, and in our wealth gained by the profits of the war.

We hoisted out of the Four Elms tavern after our refreshment of beer and bread and cheese, and worked in an hour or so down to the village of Chiddingstone which stands beyond a placid mill pond. The village itself seems, as it were, a smaller pond; as if quiet circumstance had banked its shallow flow of life and held it here beneath a glassy surface. The movement of the streets is no more than a shadow that ripples in the wind. A line of half-timbered houses is unbroken by any modern touch, and a lover of quiet and lazy beauty might fittingly set this tiny place near the top of any in this south of England.

One of these half-timbered fronts contained the inn, and here we had lunch. It was after the hour when beer is legally sold. However, when the door had been locked in a fashion familiar in America, the landlord—but I must be discreet. It was ginger beer that filled our cups. After lunch we sat in a garden at the rear, a spot of softest turf quite walled about with roses.

"I think" said Bill, "that I have sprung a blister." And he threw himself upon the sod.

And yet, for all its beauty, my impression of Chiddingstone is one of shadow. This may arise from the evergreens of the churchyard that throw their black impression on the road. If the graveyard at Westerham

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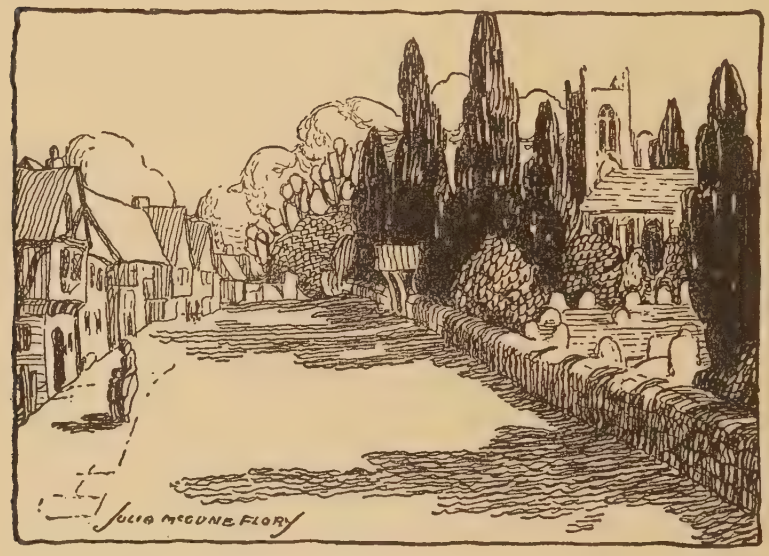
seemed a sunny place sharing in the village life with friendly gate squeaking to the sport of children, its grassy plot inviting one fearlessly to thought of rest; here at Chiddingstone somewhat of the austerity of death lies on the street. It is far more lovely than Westerham, yet there seems a brooding melancholy.



The austerity of death lies on the street

Our silent mill pond stands in meditation of the future, and the slow movement of the surface feeds a shallow trickle to eternity.

It is a town for saddened thought, and were verses written on the graveyard wall that flanks the street, inevitably their smooth measure must form an elegy. I have been told that the Elegy of Gray written at Stoke Poges is but a survivor from a poetic fashion that

once was general. A hundred others are forgotten; but his, supreme in form and thought, remains. And as a stranger treads these roads of England and looks at the country churches and their plots of grass he understands why they have gripped the hearts of poets. It is proper that religion should assist its lesson of immortality by this perpetual picture of beauty that persists beyond the grave.

Here at Chiddingstone, on the first eight tombstones that I observed, I noted that death had come respectively at the following ages—78, 90, 73, 86, 79, 68, and 81—but here the venerable record was broken by a youth of 46. From a window, however, two ladies looked out upon the street who must shortly restore the ancient count.

"Shall we start?" I asked.

"Well," said Bill, "this grave of William Spelling, who shuffled off at eighty-nine years, looks good to me."

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"For a half hour, old corpse," he answered, "I shall sleep as soundly."

Flat down he threw himself, with feet crossed on the stone like a crusader, and his deep breathing mingled with the wind.

Chiddingstone takes its name from a bowlder that is known as the chiding stone. The innkeeper had told us that nagging wives were silenced here—a device our newer civilization lacks—, but better authority gives a legend of its use as a druidical judgment seat.

"And now" said Bill, "I am ready."

"All rested?"

"Like a baby from his nap."

A mile beyond the town we found that our way turned into a private road.

"Hoy!" called out a servant from the lodge.

"Is this the road to Penshurst?" I asked.

"No, it ain't."

I showed my map and set my finger on the spot. He looked at it as I might gaze upon a blueprint of a complicated engine.

But now a shrewish woman put out her head. "Orders are orders," she said. "And no one is to be let through."

On persuasion, however, she told us in a surly fashion how we might find a path across the fields which in a silly quarter of a mile would bring us back just inside the gate. They cared not a copper farthing that we broke the spirit of their instruction if only they kept the precise letter. So we made the circuit.

We were now on a wooded road that crawled upon a ridge with cattle in the lower meadows. We crossed a bridge above a stream that seemed too idle to seek the ocean. It was shortly after five o'clock when we saw in the distance the walls of Penshurst House, eleven and a half miles from Westerham.

Bill meditated whether it would be easier to make the finish on all fours.

"I admire the locomotion of a centipede," he said.

"And why is that?" I asked.

"How little would a single blister fret him!"

The inn at Penshurst is the Leicester Arms and it is of excellent accommodation except that my bed was

again a nest. Gentle reader, mistake me not! I write not of entomology. In form it was a nest, but of lively contents it held naught, until I clambered in.

The mirror of my room was set in a frame upon the dresser, but it forever tilted forward as if it feared to

Of lively contents it held naught, until I clambered in

meet my eye. Mirrors hinged at the middle always have this complex of inferiority that keeps them bent upon the ground. I pushed a pair of stockings underneath to lift its gloomy gaze to mine. Many china plates hung upon the walls—castles, parks and floating swans.

Our dinner was of blackcock, in a room decorated with obsolete guns and the kind of pistols that Bob

Acres used when he fought his duel. Presently an Englishman entered with his wife and daughters. He went first and sat down with the waitress to shove him in, letting the ladies shift as best they could. And to him the meat came first. We spoil our women in America.

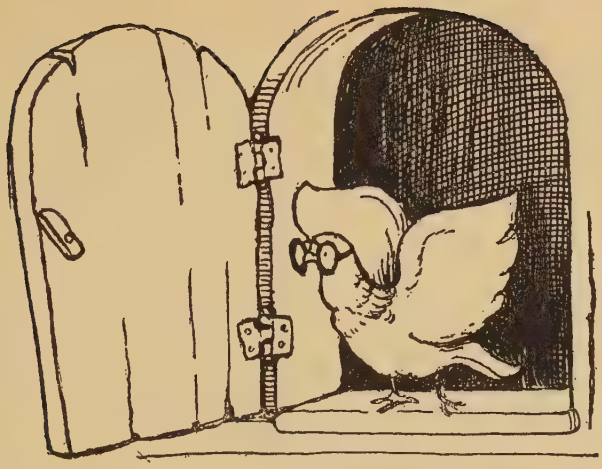
We passed the evening in the private bar where everyone aired his views on prohibition, for it is a topic that serves all around the world to stifle conversation. We are looked on as a strange unreasoning people who may be expected next to cut off a leg to thwart a natural pleasure in its use.

"We shall then" said Bill, "have crutch-runners down from Canada."

It was bitter beer all round. Our pewter cups, narrow at the brim, grew downward to a generous bottom. And this is the proper emblem for a man who, although he show his narrow self at first, grows to a wholesome girth as acquaintance ripens into friendship.

It was here I asked if one might safely drink water from the tap. It was a new idea and each person in the room seemed to pass it to his neighbor. No one had tried it, but why not? They had heard it well spoken of. It was soft and soap lathered in it. It was probably as good as any. And if one liked to drink water—well, why not?

It was early when we went to bed, and I read for an hour by candle as is proper in an English inn.



"I feel like a dove," said Bill

CHAPTER V

MORNING AT PENSHURST

THERE was a trickle of soft rain through the night and, as it had not ceased when our bacon was stored away, we sat for a time in the parlor of the inn. Beezer was busy at the piano. Bill had plucked down a copy of the Koran and sat in meditation with occasional bursts of oriental wisdom.

Presently our landlady entered to keep us company. She had managed the inn only for a year, to gain a livelihood broken by taxation. Such ill-fortune as hers, that shifts now so often the British classes, is of course regrettable; and yet, with impoverished countesses opening hat shops, there must be a grain of good in lessening that scorn with which the upper classes were used to look upon the merchant. There

was rather a fine engraving of Napoleon on the wall, pieces of better furniture and many prints—a long set of the English Kings stretching down the hallway like the nightmare of Macbeth—, and this was all that she had saved from the wreckage of her fortune. Her pleasant manners, unsoured by poverty, would have graced a larger drawing-room. The inn had been till lately the property of Lord Lyle and Dudley who owns Penshurst, but it is at present one of a chain of inns belonging to a Tonbridge brewery.

And now the weather cleared.

"I feel like a dove," said Bill. "Let me out. I'll look for Ararat."

It was his work on the Koran that changed the sky, for presently a timid sun peeped out like Noah from his ark to see if the waters were abating from the earth.

Penshurst House opened at two o'clock. The entrance to the park is under a stone gatehouse with a long drive outside the kitchen walls circling to the offices and stables. Adjacent to this drive flows the river Medway which is here but a tender stripling in the fields. Soon it will grow a beard at Rochester and carry a dirty load of shipping to the sea.

The entrance to Penshurst for those on foot is through a lich gate at the top of what is called Leicester Square, which is a small flagged court set about with half-timbered houses, with a great elm squatting at the center in a tangle of spreading roots. Leicester Square in London, now the resort of music halls and late food, was named for these same Leicesters of Penshurst of

whom Robert Dudley was the great queen's favorite. Leicester, Kenilworth and Amy Robsart! It is an old story. This village square is of such an ancient aspect that at any of its leaded windows one might properly sit to the scanning of an Elizabethan verse, or hark to the

A small flagged court set about with half-timbered houses

later time when Waller sent here his pretty lines to Sacharissa until she threw him overboard for a nobler husband.

Or with surer entertainment we might turn to Thomas Fuller, for in his Worthies he has written of Sir Philip Sidney who once lived here at Penshurst before he departed for the Dutch campaign where he was killed. "Such his appetite to learning," he writes, "that he could never be fed fast enough therewith; and so quick and strong his digestion, that he

soon turned it into wholesome nourishment, and thrived healthfully thereon." Fuller's English moves in a limpid stream of wit that shows its nearness to Elizabethan source. He continues with Sir Philip. "His homebred abilities travel perfected with foreign accomplishments, and a sweet nature set a gloss upon both. He was so essential to the English court, that it seemed maimed without his company, being a complete master of matter and language, as his Arcadia doth evidence." Such mellow flow of words befits a chair at a Tudor window. Any excuse is good that directs us to the witty pages of the Worthies.

The path runs from the lich gate past the graveyard. Then it squeezes through a tricky gate that holds the cattle and crosses a meadow to the front of Penshurst House where a ditch and sunken wall separate the closer lawn from the grazing land. This wall is cunningly contrived not to break the view of those who sit upon the terrace. Although there are many fine trees, from this viewpoint the meadow is open and sunny with just a touch of bareness.

There is no hint of castle here, for all of Penshurst that now stands apparent was built when feudalism in its stricter sense had passed away and the countryside needed no bastions for its defense.

"Listen, Rollo," I said "for your uncle is about to instruct you in many curious matters."

I fixed him with my eye.

"Architecture" I began. . . .

Architecture travels always hand in hand with political necessity and any ignorance of one can be

mended by the slightest knowledge of the other. Norman towers were not built for show. They were the implements of William's conquest, and the thickness of their walls is the measure of his task. The pyramids of Egypt were the battle of man's vanity against eternity, but Norman stones fought a nearer foe. And so as the centuries brought peace their battlements were lightened into decoration and windows were pierced for comfort. I fancy, too, that the status of women was a factor; for the Renaissance in France produced buildings to meet the whim of courtesans. It is apparent then that most of these walls of Penshurst were constructed when domestic differences of state were no longer settled with a bombard and when wealth took its ease in country living. Women, doubtless, passed on the fashion of its brocade but these outer walls are of men's design without that lightness of tower and balcony that marks the contemporary century in France when Azay-le-Rideau and Chenonceaux were built. If life here was of a gorgeous texture, with Queen Elizabeth in pageantry on the lawn, it was at heart the home of men who gave their major hours to heavy public matters.

The Tudor building is strong and solid, with theft from Norman and Gothic in tower, window and crenelation; for it was erected when the Reformation had laid its dead hand upon the symbols of the church and architecture had turned to domestic use. What dogma lost in beauty, country living gained. Mullions, crowded down by a low-hung ceiling, trimmed flat the window's soaring curve, and walls continued into a light fringe

of indented stone at the hint of the former fighting tops of Norman castles.

If one would travel with intelligence through a long-

What dogma lost in beauty, country living gained

settled country he must know these marks that distinguish the periods of architecture. These are his obvious handbook to the past. And when he has learned their easy forms he must be content to stand in contest with

them before he cribs an answer. Each of a dozen centuries offers him a clew—the size of stone, the round arch, a dogtooth decoration, the undercutting of a water drip, a pointed window, the grouping of lancets beneath an upper light, perpendicular tracery, fan vaulting. These and a hundred other clews are his. Or if the vaulting seems not to match a window, if the style of ribbing is discordant with a weight of column, he will find it sport to put sequent dates upon the building and say that thus a chapel was added or that the wall of an older fabric was altered when its use was changed. This is a game more intense than bridge.

And if to this knowledge a man can add sufficient facts of glass, tapestries, carved wood and brass, he can hold high his head before any sexton and wag his chin with wisdom.

The original Penshurst was called Pencaster and shows in this the touch of Rome, but the great hall is the earliest building now extant and was erected toward the close of the fifteenth century. It was about two hundred years later that the property came into the possession of the Sidney family through the gift of Edward Sixth, and in the years following the general range of buildings was constructed. Sir Philip Sidney lived here. Here lived his nephew, Robert Dudley. All in good time Algernon Sidney was buried here. He urged against the killing of King Charles and won the wrath of Cromwell, but this did not prevent his execution when the royalists returned. And Waller wrote verses to Sacharissa. And Ben Jonson wrote verses, too, but did not send them to any young

lady in particular. And Southey, Elizabeth Browning, Swinburne and a dozen others wrote verses and mailed them out to editors.

"I think" said Beezer, for we had been sitting for a half hour on the damp grass of the meadow, "that I am stuffed. It's time we went inside."

The great hall was built in the fifteenth century. Its fire was at the center, originally with an opening and cupola above to carry off the smoke. A pile of faggots now marks the place. The roof is sharply pitched with timbers that rest on grotesque corbels. At the upper end of the hall is a dais on which the lord, his guests and family ate, at the lower end a screen with gallery above. Doors open past the screen to the cellar and kitchens, and from the dais a flight of stairs leads to a drawing-room where a narrow window looks down upon the hall. Through this window the lord of the manor, if his servants' riot grew too loud, could spy upon their entertainment and count the tuns of beer and wine that were rolled up from the cellar.

For the great hall primarily was not so much a place for guests and banquet as a common center for homely feudal living. A drawing-room was a withdrawing-room to which the family went from meals in order that the hall might be left to the evening uses of the servants. Here, below the dais, the retainers ate at long tables of heavy oak, each with a wooden trencher. At Knole House presently we shall see a list of one hundred and twenty servants who dined in the great hall. And these halls, too, in early times, were the common sleeping room of the men. They had no beds but

found comfort in the rushes of the floor as best they could, where perhaps bones had been thrown to the hungry dogs. Beds were for quality and women, with pillows only for those who lay in childbirth. I can arouse no enthusiasm for this floor of rushes. Its filth must have invited plague.

"I prefer my nest at the Leicester Arms," said Bill.

And yet, even if customs were foul and life lacked decency for common folk, I fancy that the servants must often have passed a jolly evening in this familiar company. A fire burns on the stones, with smoke drifting to the roof which is purple if an adverse wind checks the draft. Bows are restrung, tools are sharpened, clothing is patched, chess is played and songs are sung—the ballads that we gather into books.

They hadna sail'd a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

If we are inclined to think of servants in a modern sense—a transitory population that flits from house to house and spends its evenings at the movies—we shall have a false notion of this life. It was a mighty family that changed chiefly with a birth or death. When a man grew too feeble for war or the field he was shifted to the cellar, or he held the stirrup of his lord. As soon as his granddaughter was able to run alone she washed the trenchers or passed the meat at table. It was a life of discipline under despotic rule with harsh punishment for those who were sulky in their service; and yet

it gave livelihood and security in dangerous times and bred a loyalty that now has largely passed away.

A great fellow in a blazing jacket had explained the hall but, pocketing his fee, he now consigned us to a woman servant for the softer domestic rooms above. And with this change we left the feudal age for the period of Elizabeth.

Nor do I see how anyone, although he be steeped in bookish history, can gain a picture of these spacious days if he is entirely ignorant of these Tudor houses. The past lives in these majestic rooms and galleries, with their portraits, their rugs and brocaded furniture, their Venetian mirrors and curtained beds, their trophies of gift and war and exploration. The cicerone spins her tale of ancient days. This is a painting by Van Dyke. It was in this bed, with silk new-made in a Flemish loom, that Elizabeth slept. Here is a portrait of Robert Dudley, who is given a bad name by Sir Walter Scott. And the past arises to the soft droning of her voice. In this chair the great queen sat with her satin slippers to the hearth. That embroidered screen kept the firelight from her face. That lacquered box held her colored silk.

And now as the night advances she gossips of familiar matters—how Babbington, whom she had trusted, was caught in treason—, of Walsingham and his suspicions against the Queen of Scots. Drake's ship, perhaps, lies at Deptford loading for its trip around the world. Or already there are rumors from Corunna that the great fleet gathers for its long-delayed attack. The talk may run to farthingales and the latest frippery of

dress—perhaps stockings made of silk which in England are a new creation. "Like these, dear friends," with the lifting of a petticoat to display an ankle. A poet, too,—a common fellow of the Bank—what is his outlandish name?—has written such pretty rhymes in his play at Essex's marriage that half the court have learned them for their table talk. "In maiden meditation, fancy free. That is yourself, beyond a doubt, your majesty." "So?" the queen remarks "It is a smooth phrase. We must have the fellow fetch his lute to Hampton Court."

There is a sighing of wind in the winter chimney. Tapestries stir upon the wall. Brocades of musty wear regain their freshness. And the cicerone leads her flock to another room.

Quiet days have fallen now on Penshurst. The galleries are closed except at the hour when visitors are shown about. The owner is a bachelor who keeps but a broken remnant of its servants. We saw him last night walking in the village street and he was dressed in common tweed without a feather or ribbon to link him up to braver days. Cattle graze upon his park where once swept a pageantry of silk. The mighty furniture hears now no gossip of the fall of favorites, and if any whisper fall across the windy night in these neglected rooms it is but an echo from an older world.

"That's checked off," said Beezer, who chafes in hard instruction. "Let's go back to lunch. I'm fed up with old Queen Liz."

And he skipped to show the perfection of his surgery

CHAPTER VI

TO THE ROAD AGAIN

IT was the middle of the afternoon when we set out for Tunbridge Wells. Our last night's rain had cleared the windy sky, and white clouds, tired of sedentary living, ran before us on a holiday.

"How's the blister?" I asked.

"All bandaged up," said Bill. "Hojotoho!" And he skipped to show the perfection of his surgery.

Near by Farnham we left the highroad for a path across the fields. In a grove on an upland slope a family had come for supper and as we passed there was a small commotion at the unpacking of the hampers and the spread of blankets on the ground. We were not so

close that we could discover whether cold fowl or mutton were handed out, but it was a touch of pleasant country life. One stout gentleman sat in such easy comfort with an expectant plate upon his knees that, except for a change of dress, it might have been Mr. Pickwick at Manor Farm.

"I wonder where Manor Farm was," said Bill. "It would be fun to find it."

"Off behind us to the north, not many miles from Rochester," I answered. "Do you remember how Mr. Winkle rode the tall horse?"

"'Now, shiny Villiam,'" quoted Bill, "'give the gen'lm'n the ribbons.'"

We stopped a bit to watch the picnic.

"Look at the old fellow eating!" said Bill. "The women feeding him. I'll bet it's mutton."

> Mutton and beef and bacon and sole,
> A boiled potato, a sweet,
> A kipper, string beans, a mug of beer!
> This is all that Englishmen eat.

At Rusthall we came out on a highroad and were swept into a noise of traffic which was now at its worst on Saturday afternoon. Bill cried out at once "Oh, my soul!" and sat down hard for rest. But he was too stubborn to seek a lift in a public bus and presently advanced with a gait that seemed a compound of a broken arch, a blister, a tight shoe, senility and paralysis.

On a high common used for picnics we came in sight of Tunbridge Wells where we were to pass the night.

Our hotel was the Swan, with a rear entrance from

a stone-paved court that is known as the Pantiles where there is a band stand, a row of shops for trinkets and a spring of healing waters now fallen out of fashion.

Young Mr. Warrington of Virginia came once to Tunbridge Wells in attendance on his wicked aunt to gain acquaintance with the world of fashion, its bad hours, high gambling and easy virtue. And here of a morning on the Pantiles he saw many famous men—Chesterfield, with star and ribbon; Johnson, who scarcely consented to touch his beaver in return to his lordship's greeting; Richardson, with Clarissa newly written, walking in a halo of female worship. Two hundred years ago Tunbridge Wells was of lofty fashion for wit and wealth and title, and a close rival of Bath. I have no doubt that many novelists preceded Thackeray in sending their heroes to Tunbridge to furnish out a spicy chapter; just as a writer of our day chooses Cannes or Aix-les-Bains if he fears that otherwise his plot grows dull.

"Do our rooms face the Pantiles?" I asked the lady of the wicket.

"I do not know," she answered. "Perhaps."

"Perhaps?"

"I have not been to look. Ask the porter!"

I saw at once that my inquiry was an insult to her station. In England no lady at a wicket demeans herself with trivial knowledge; or perhaps she is in compact with the porter lest he lose his tip.

"Can we drink the water from the tap?" I asked.

"There ain't no reason why you shouldn't." And then she added, "If you like it."

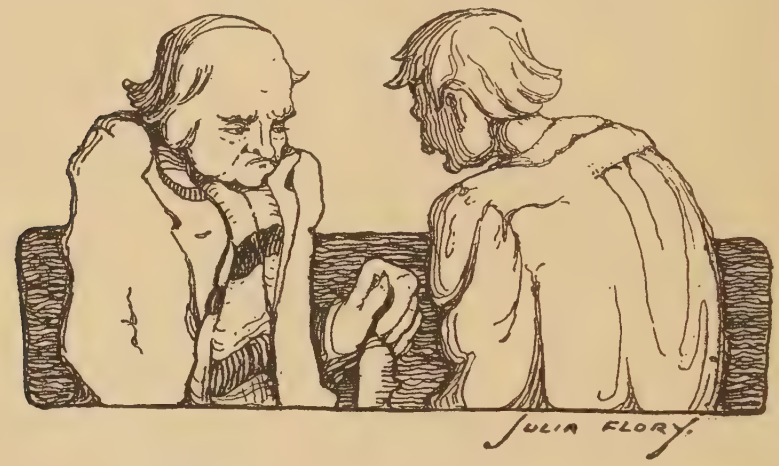
On a common across from the hotel there was a kind of traveling show—a thing of whirligigs and booths, of penny knickknacks and painted wagons. Beezer looked at it fondly from the window and, as one man, we decided on a vulgar evening.

These shows are of gypsy entertainment among the smaller towns and they play for a week or less and take to the road again. Their amusements are much like those of cheaper American resorts on the edge of cities, but they are of a dingier pattern without our large excitement and flash of electric light. Our crowds, too, are of many races and are touched with something continental. They are of franker uproar and more spontaneous outcry. They are dressed better, although only of tawdry smartness, and they are looser in extravagance. The English crowd is shabby by comparison, and its women wear rusty bonnets from an upper shelf. The crowd is rheumatic, feeble in the joints and with lack of teeth. When it indulges in an evening entertainment it takes, as the phrase goes, its pleasure sadly. One wonders if this sodden gathering is of the race that conquered the world. But in England there are two races—the conquering race descended from feudal days, and another which always preserves its sense of inferior station.

At this show in Tunbridge Wells a tiny train circled through a painted canvas tunnel, and the flash of darkness was almost too brief for love. A Palace of Fun and Mystery was a single room upon a cart; and this, too, was a chance for the squeezing of hands. Airships circled around a central shaft and swung

out on the ends of chains, so here again a lady must be grappled in the arms. And all of these catchpennies were crowded, for love is a whip to lash the nag extravagance.

But the favorite choice was a revolving disk of polished surface. Here a young man sat at the very middle with legs outspread and a young lady side-



Feeble in the joints and with lack of teeth

saddle across his knees. Her arms were placed about his neck and she was hugged close for economy of space. Presently, as the speed of the disk increased, they were thrown from their balance and were shot forward to the gutter with more than a flash of cotton stocking. It was but a shallow pretense of modesty that she clutched her skirts, for the end was ordained and her legs as familiar as her garter. A master of ceremonies arranged these contests with centrifugal force, with glib remarks of double meaning that raised

a grin. If accepted lovers did not offer themselves, he chose partners at random through the crowd in order that strangers might meet in pleasant circumstance. Nor did any girl decline his invitation.

But this is but a vulgar fallen entertainment, for Tunbridge Wells flourished two hundred years ago and now lives only in the twilight of its grandeur. Fuller's Worthies still lies on my desk, for yesterday I drew it down for Penshurst. "The first discovery of this water. . . ." he writes, "is believed from a footman of a Dutch lord, who passed this way, and drinking thereof found it in taste very like to that of the Spa in Germany." But of fashion he writes nothing, for the excellent reason that Fuller lived before the parade of lace set in. A legend explains that St. Dunstan once took the Devil by the nose with red-hot tongs and that the Devil, to ease his pain, thrust it in the spring.

"And I suppose" said Beezer, "that is the reason why it tastes of sulphur."

"Quite right, Rollo!" I replied.

It was in sixteen hundred and six that the value of the spring was discovered. In sixteen thirty, so quickly did its fame arise, Queen Henrietta, journeying here at the bidding of her physician, was forced to camp upon the downs for lack of proper housing in the throng. Charles the Second's Queen took up her residence here and it was her patronage that brought fashion to the town. Hotels and pavilions were built and by the end of the century Tunbridge Wells was in high favor with the idle rich.

It was about two hundred years ago that a traveler

by the name of Anthony Hamilton put up at the Wells. "The company though always numerous," he wrote, "is always select; since those who repair thither for diversion ever exceed the number of those who go thither for health, everything there breathes mirth and pleasure; constraint is banished, familiarity is established upon the first acquaintance, and joy and pleasure are the sole sovereigns of the place. The company" he continued, "are accommodated with lodgings in little, clean and convenient habitations that lie straggling and separated from each other, a mile and a half all around the Wells, where the company meet in the morning; this place consists of a long walk, shaded by spreading trees, under which they walk while they are drinking the waters; on one side of this walk is a long row of shops, plentifully stocked with all manner of toys, lace, gloves, stockings, and where there is raffling, as at Paris, in the Foire de Saint Germain; on the other side of the walk is the market, and, as it is the custom here for every person to buy their own provisions, care is taken that nothing offensive appears on the stalls. . . . As soon as the evening comes every one quits his little palace to assemble on the bowling green, where, in the open air, those who choose dance upon a turf more soft and smooth than the finest carpet in the world."

We shall leave our inquiry here. The Lido and St. Dinar are fashion's current whim. The Pantiles lie silent and forgotten beneath our window.

A royal coat of arms

CHAPTER VII

A DIRTY INN TO END THE DAY

TUNBRIDGE WELLS was a disappointment. Fifteen years ago I spent several days here at a hotel facing on Mt. Ephraim which is common land adjacent to the town. The hotel had been full of prim little ladies whose husbands slaved in London or already had shuffled off to clear their widows' path. Each of these ladies gave her affection to a small dog that sat on a chair at her table and sniffed for food. Talk at breakfast was whether Flossie had slept. Or perhaps she had scampered in the dew and had caught snuffles. Old ladies and dogs spent their mornings on the Pantiles, to which they were wheeled in roller chairs with a boy to push. The band played, the ladies knitted, the dogs jumped for the balls of worsted as often as they fell, and an old woman peddled vile water from the spring. It was altogether stupid and delightful, and seemed a dear but muddy sediment left in the pool of fashion.

On this present visit we saw none of this. It was after hours on the Pantiles for the knitters of Mt. Ephraim. Our hotel, in the center of the town, was built for commerce rather than diversion; so we missed the sniffing dogs. The old woman had gone home with her tin dipper. Last night's circus, also, had shocked us from the past. We had fallen on a Saturday night when folk live most intensely in the present and they had destroyed illusion and all the touches of the eighteenth century. Other days, other diversions! For us the whirling disk and cotton legs!

We were afoot at ten o'clock up a broad street of well-kept houses where already there was a showing of sober cloth for church. Our road lay wide and tame through Frant with now and then a Sunday motor abroad upon a picnic. After Frant we headed to the southeast with a fine valley on our right.

We had walked for five miles when we came to an inn beside the road near Wadhurst station, and here we had lunch. The private bar was filled with stuffed birds and animals under glass, and there was a clock that did not run. We have found that the clocks of England usually live this sedentary life. I cannot be sure whether it is an apathy that rises with the dole, or whether these hills and valleys prosper best in ignorance how fast the sun shall sink. Where Norman walls are overgrown with ivy and time turns backward with longing for a world now gone, of what service are clocks that mark but the present hour?

After lunch we sat on a bench before the inn and

contemplated a string of box cars and signboards (rare in England) that commended Bovril, Jeyes Fluid and Whitbread's Bottled Beer.

Bill sat squarely on a thistle

"What is Jeyes Fluid?" asked Bill. "I must try it. Does it compare with stout?"

"It is a disinfectant," I answered.

Then to the road again, much refreshed by our lunch and meditation!

In another hour, however, we sat for another rest and it was here, as I recall, that Bill sat squarely on a thistle and arose with an "Oh, my soul!" *The snail's on the thorn!* is a false expression of happiness and tranquillity.

Presently a young man came up and was in great amazement to learn we were so far from home. He lived with his mother just down the road. He had served with the armies in France and had been a policeman in London; but, since his discharge, Wadhurst

where we had lunched had been his farthest journey. He asked us the fare to Canada and shook his head in gloomy thought. When we arose he walked along with us and pointed out his mother at a window. It was a pretty cottage on a hill, above a range of country tinted bright with sun.

And as we walked the valley widened out, lingered at our stride and closed behind us. Imperceptibly there was a shifting of the hills upon their passive base, as if our footsteps were the march of time.

At Ticehurst near five o'clock the Duke of York's hotel was locked, nor could any pounding rouse the Duke. Each district has its hours, set by a local magistrate, when drink may not be served, and during these hours sometimes a country inn will shut not only its bar but its outside door as well. Bill hammered on the panel like one of the foolish virgins, for no one answered. Or rather, in his voice was the weakening whisper of Tintagiles, as he stood at the frightful gate of—at the frightful gate of—whatever it was that he stood with weakening whisper at the frightful gate of. Maeterlinck makes these things too hard. Bill—note the value of plain speech!—pounded on the tavern door that led inward to the bar because he was tired and thirsty and because the Duke was still asleep and would not let him in for a mug of stout. Then Bill huddled himself wearily on the step and ran a dry tongue around the parched margin of his mouth.

"Think of it," he said. "This happens in Merry England. One might as well walk to East Liverpool."

"Where is that?" asked Beezer.

"A dry town" he answered, "in Ohio."

There was, however, a smaller tavern across the street. Here we were told that a pint of beer would be supplied us if we were so good as to sit back from the window. But no beds were left. At the week-end there is an exodus from London of folk in char-à-bancs, and Ticehurst lies on one of the highways to the Channel. The returning tide of trippers runs high on Sunday night, and already there was a stirring in the bar to prepare for the evening's thirst.

"Ah," said Beezer, "a touch of Tennyson—

" '. . . such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full of sound and foam.' "

"Misquoted vilely," I replied.

"An improvement," said Beezer.

Bill swished his stout in a circle around his mug. "Where is the nearest inn?" he asked.

"At Hurst Green."

"And the distance?"

"More'n three miles."

"I'll die first," said Bill, and he groaned inside his mug. Those pretty boots of his, which I have commended for their beauty in a drawing-room, had done their dirty work.

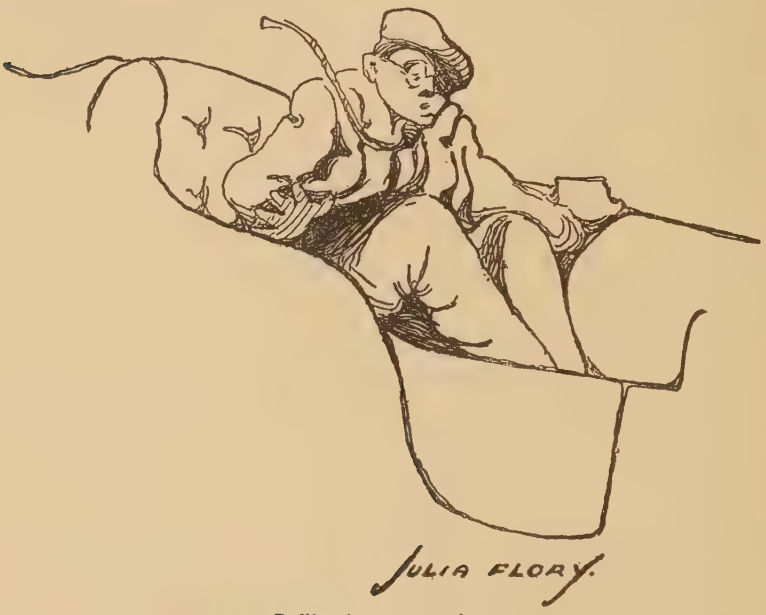
Presently he beckoned to the landlord. "I'm a poor man," he said, "but I'll give my lovely daughter dowered with half my kingdom to him who will transport me to Hurst Green."

"Twelve shillings for a Ford," said the landlord.

"Done!" said Bill.

Beezer and I set out on foot, and soon he passed us lolling in easy comfort.

A brisk wind had brushed the film of distance from the hills; and great clouds ran across the sky, as if they, too, had spent the holidays at Margate and now refreshed were pelting up to town for Monday's business.



Lolling in easy comfort

But char-à-bancs were full of sleepy folk who had dug in the sand all day or dropped their thriftless pennies into cheap amusement. They leaned against one another cheek to cheek and their peaceful breathing was lost in the rumble of the wheels.

At Hurst Green there was the usual uproar of trippers who lay off for drink. Bill, of course, had already

arrived and he met us on the steps with word that we could get beds only when the crowd had been served their tea—one room surely and another if a man failed to come who had written for accommodation. All through the inn there was a running about with trays and cups, collisions in the hallway of food coming up and empties going down, the tramp of impatient feet, calls for spoons and sugar, the spilling of careless liquor and a general swilling in the bar which was foul beyond excuse. Char-â-bancs honked outside to hurry up their passengers and gentlemen issued from the tap wiping their lips upon their sleeves. We escaped from this hubbub and found a corner of the garden at the rear where we were safe from being splashed.

"Does it occur to you" said Bill, "that except for the trivet at the hearth and the milk-maid's stool there are no creatures in all the world which have three legs?"

"The thought had not struck me," I confessed.

"It's odd," said Bill. "Bipeds we have, quadrupeds, six-, eight-, ten-legged animals; but always their legs are of an even number. Consider the zoo! Can you remember one?"

"But with an odd number they would not balance," I objected. "A boat must have a like number of oars each side."

"Your reasoning is shallow," answered Bill.

"They would wobble," I persisted.

"Not at all. The milk-stool is quite firm. Ah, I had forgotten the kangaroo; but he is in a manner an experiment. His tail is a kind of leg and aids him in locomotion. He balances, then leaps. The tail surely was not con-

trived merely to swish at flies. The monkey puts it to frequent use. With him it is in a sense a leg. Half of his agility comes from it. But nature, having advanced so far, abandoned the experiment."

"And what conclusion do you draw from this?" I asked.

"On a walking trip" Bill answered, and his tone was of a feeble melancholy, "I would find it convenient to have an extra leg to throw into service at four o'clock. Until that hour it might dangle behind and be a passenger. But with it for substitute like an extra tire, one blister would not retard my speed."

He stretched himself upon the grass. He pulled his cap across his eyes and mouth. But his brain was too busy for sleep. Presently he spoke, in rather a muffled manner, through his cap.

"I was thinking" he began, "that if man had three legs a waltz would be his marching tune. Bing bung bung, bing bung bung!"

"And so it would. If all of them were working."

"But waltzes have something dreamy in their composition. They are not tunes to stir the vigor. They are sentimental—persuasive to laziness. I would sit much by the roadside, in that event, in meditation of far-off matters."

"You speak the truth," I answered.

"An army of three legs could not go forth to battle to the present tump-tump of the inspiring drum. Consider the waltzes that you know! Is there one of them that could hurry an army on the march? With three legs and a waltz, each man would reflect on a girl he had

left behind. Forward! Waltz! It would be a blow to war."

"And so it would," I answered.

"Much of our vigor" continued Bill, still speaking through his cap, "comes because, being bipeds, we are fitted to the greater vigor of four-beat time. From it we get our energy, our will to conquer the infinite. With three legs our fiber would relax. We would move on dreams and sentiment."

"Sleep a bit," I interrupted. "Poor fellow, you have need of rest."

"Quite right," said Bill.

He stretched his two feet into space as if they groped for worlds unknown, and his snoring mingled in the wind.

It was already twilight before the thunder of the char-à-bancs had faded to the north. In the wreckage of the dining room, where a dog nosed about for salvage, we were served cold fowl and hunks of bread.

"Two hundred and forty teas we've served today," our hostess said. "On any night but Saturday and Sunday I could have fed you better." She drew a sleeve across her dirty face. "I'm that tired on Sunday night."

"How does it come" I asked, "that a royal coat of arms hangs above your door?"

"Oh that! Queen Victoria was once saved from a runaway just in front. A gentleman who lived near by ran out and seized the horses. And here she slept—in the room that the tall gentleman has."

Bill's room! And he lay on the coverlet because it was the cleanest stratum of his bed.

Beezer and I slept at the back and from the window we looked down upon a midden of broken food that had been thrown out from the kitchen. I went over my bed by candlelight; but life, if it existed, rested from its labor. Nor was my rest disturbed.

Here, let me add, that only at Hurst Green and one other place was our inn unwholesome. Bill hereafter always spoke of this place as Robin's Nest—why, I do not know—and with a shudder. Yet the landlady was an obliging soul and we were sorry for her distress.

An old blind man had been sunning himself

CHAPTER VIII

INTRODUCING A BLIND MAN AND THE LADY POMFRET-DAWKEN

WE were abroad early Monday morning and walked through high and windy country to the south. Turning to the east two miles short of Robertsbridge, presently we passed a wooden tower where one might climb an extra forty feet for a penny and a further view. But where nature has already piled the hills to a fitting eminence such addition is a vain conceit. Who but a fool would mount a ladder to increase the stature of the Alps, or fetch a stool to Matterhorn? There are such structures in the Berkshires, on all mountains that tourists frequent; and they do but emphasize man's littleness when he stands before his God.

And so, meditating sourly on the folly of travelers,

we passed beyond the hill and came to a certain Junction Inn, set where two roads crossed, and here we rested on a bench before the door.

Bill and Beezer are great cronies for discussion; and on this occasion, leaving Parsifal and Galli-Curci which are their usual contention, they came to a hot dispute whether the ax or the electric chair were the softer death. Beezer leaned to the electric chair; and Bill, to urge his contrary argument for the ax, lifted up both arms and brought them down in a mighty swing to show how speedily death descends when the headsman is master of his craft.

His persuasion was too emphatic, for suddenly—pat upon the stroke!—the bench collapsed and threw them to the ground. An old blind man had been sunning himself at the other end with cane against his chin, and he also went down in the crash. Bill picked him up, dusted him off and led him to the tap to drown all troubles in a mug of beer. The old fellow was good-natured at the accident and lamented with a twinkling smile that the argument had been so rudely interrupted. It had been a pleasant break from his monotonous meditation and every few minutes, as the thought of it recurred, he fell to chuckles. "An' have ye considered hangin'?" he asked. "It's not so bad, they say as knows."

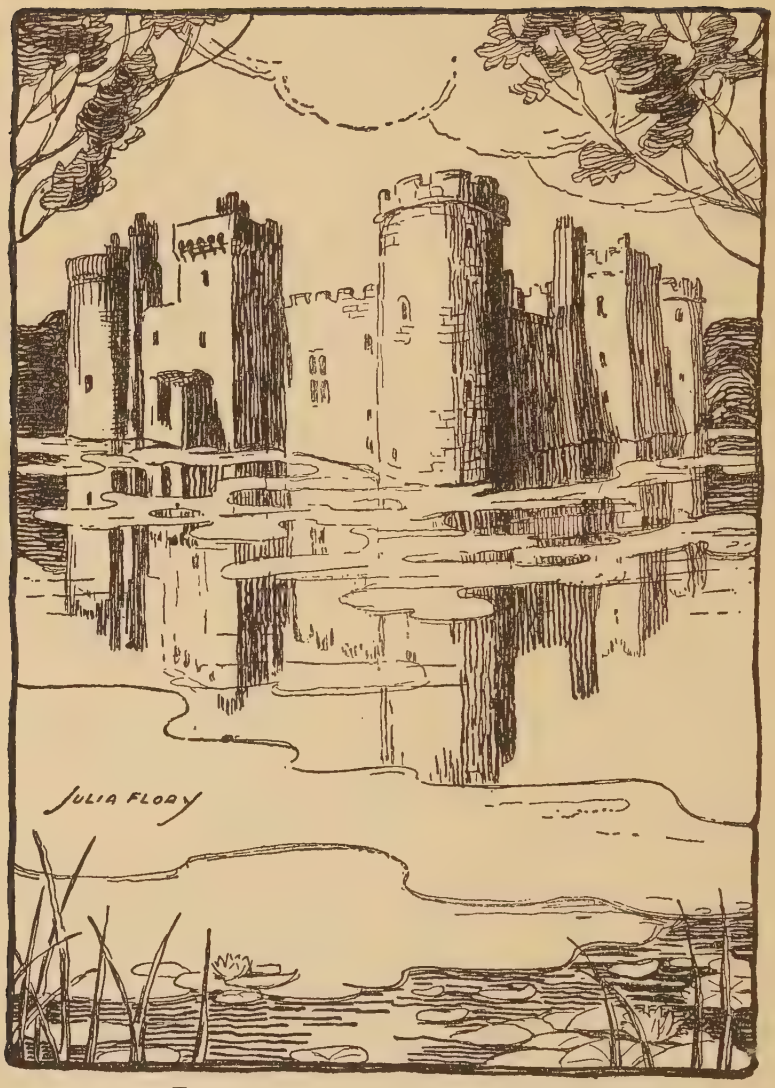
Though sunlight is kept forever from the blind, its glow reaches to the heart and warms their disposition. The old man told us that he had come down from the north through all the rush of London without attendant, to spend a holiday with his daughter who ran the

tavern. There had been a change of busses in the city, but a stranger had taken his elbow at the curb; for strangers were always kind. This is the reason of a blind man's sunny thought. His infirmity receives such an instant sympathy and care that he grows to think that every one is commonly as good all through the ugly day as in that one moment when he is led across to safety. In this thankful estimate of others the sunlight reaches to the blind. To know one is to know a philosopher of kindly judgment and happy thought. And one might suppose that half the sorrow of ordinary lives enters at the portal of the eyes. If shut and sealed we are a strong citadel against attack.

It was the granddaughter of our blind man who brought the mugs, and he yielded to a second filling and tapped her hand in mute affection. He confided as we left him that he had been won by Bill's argument to vote in favor of the ax.

We now pitched off the hills to the lower grassy land that lies along the Rother; and here, on an island in a lake no larger than a pond, we saw among the trees the crenelated walls of Bodiam Castle.

Any guidebook worth its salt will tell you that Bodiam Castle was built in the fourteenth century by Sir Edward Dalyngruge, a soldier of Cressy and Poictiers on his return from France; and there are marks inside of window, vault and pointed arch that corroborate the date. He employed the science of the continent, the pattern of the French, to make this a stronghold secure against attack. But it is an expert eye that can squint wisely on the texture of a wall and tell thereby



To one who lies on the grassy bank beyond

the precise turning of the centuries and the source of its builder's theft. And to one who lies on the grassy bank beyond the still waters of the lake—if any thought at all shall come to break a lazy hour—it will be the days of conquering William that present themselves.

Facts are for a narrow schoolroom, to be brushed aside upon a holiday. These battlemented towers that rise from their cool shadow in the lily pads, these walls looped for stone and arrow, seem to belong to the years when the Norman Duke first seized the land and held it roughly. Senlac to the south, where he broke the Saxon force, is here but the flight of a lazy bird; and any taller spire of Battle Abbey, if it stood on tiptoe, could see us across the hills. The shallow Rother washes the meadows to the right but, in its greater depth when the sea swept up to Rye and drowned the fields, heavy ships from France might have landed their clumsy ordnance here. In the trees there stirs the song of far-off battles, when Taillefer tossed his spear and rushed with a cry against his enemies. It is the Norman charge that sounds upon the stillness of the noon and fetches word that Harold has been slain and lies among his broken men.

Fancy constructs what world it will. It throws aside its book. And where it shall discover that walls look down on silent water to catch their beauty on the surface, it will loosely meditate how vanity survives its youth. This tower, like a gray coquette whose daring eyes are dim, still smooths its wrinkles at a glass and thinks of future conquest. The wind that rubs upon its cheek is the finger of a waiting maid in patient office of perfection.

It must be that such silly fancies moved us all, for presently Bill contrived for Bodiam a whole tissue of absurdity. It seems, for so he argued, that once in older times a lady by the name of Pomfret-Dawken—this is pure invention—lived within these walls and did service to the Duchess as a genteel companion to amuse her evenings.

She was slipping a bit from youth, but so also was the Duchess. Pomfret, however, although her figure was overplump (the point whereof will presently appear), still retained her looks and a challenge of the eye; whereas the Duchess had so abominable a taste for purple turbans—doubtless Bill's anachronism, rising from his observation of a present fashion in every inn where ladies gathered for their tea—a taste for purple turbans, I repeat, that as time went on she cooled the ardor of his Grace. She may, also, have worn a mobcap in to breakfast and slippers that slapped against her heels; and all of us know that these defects are fatal unto love. The moon itself is not so inconstant as the husband of an unbrushed wife.

"She ate crackers in bed," said Bill, "which fretted his lordship much."

Now it was the custom of the times—what times, God knows!—for ladies to sit of an evening at the hearth and work upon a frame a pink cupid behind a ribbon. Or they played at draughts with a flaring wick within a sconce, dealing out gossip with the moves. His Grace, meantime, being of the stuff that all men are, passed his evenings in the rough employment of

the hall where he drank confusion to the King of France and rolled with a hiccough up to bed. What was the Duchess's surprise therefore when, on one particularly windy night when thirst should have raged its worst, in walks the Duke as nearly sober as consorted with the habit of the times and takes his place between the ladies at the board.

It was an attention so foreign to his practice that the Duchess scanned him with a shrewd lorgnette. Then she turned to Pomfret, if by chance she had an explanation. It was the Duchess's intuition that suspected trouble in Pomfret's demure dropping of her eyes. Ladies should be careful in such matters, for a lorgnette pierces to the soul. The sky is not so open as a heart that is discovered by a rival.

Pomfret, Bill asserts, had an upturned nose. Such noses, although they are not classical, yet lend themselves to the interest of a manly glance. And certainly the candle's yellow flare dealt kindly with her face and quite rubbed out a freckle here and there that dulled her beauty in the sun.

And yet domestic peace might still have prospered had not the Duke gone to fetch his boots and called to Pomfret to assist him in the darkened closet. There came out no sound of rummaging upon the Duchess's listening ear, although his Grace usually in such quest overturned a shelf or two and made a clatter among the boxes. When at last they issued from the shadow there burned a rosy light on Pomfret's cheeks beyond any tinting of the candle. Pomfret was a minx. She had been kissed among the boots. That night they

played at draughts no more and the Duchess's pillow was wet with tears.

Now any woman of our modern times would have sought to mend matters by attention to her face and

There burned a rosy light on Pomfret's cheeks

figure. She would have sworn off waffles, touched her lips with ruddy juice and changed her taste from purple bonnets. But the Duchess, although she grieved, still kept her habit of sweetened tarts. Bill does not record whether the worsted cupid suffered, but certainly she

worked with languid fingers. Regularly now the Duke gave his evenings to the drawing-room, and regularly he fetched his boots with Pomfret-Dawken's help. If her face returned no more in blushes, it merely showed

A lorgnette pierces to the soul

how her guilt grew hard. "This is where the first act ends," said Bill.

It was when matters had progressed so far that war broke out in France. When the message came it was boots again that night, but five minutes in the dark

were stretched to ten. And when at dawn the iron Duke took to horse and waved his hand beyond the moat it was Pomfret's fluttering heart that followed him.

And now Bill was pleased to skip a year and set his tale on a night of spring when battles had been fought and his Grace returned in triumph. At noon a horseman came with word that the Duke had landed from his ship and that a bed be aired for his arrival. A fresh spigot was hammered into place. The village band was gathered, and all afternoon the oboe practiced.

During the early evening as they waited the Duchess and Pomfret-Dawken played at draughts as usual, but dark thoughts were in the mind of each. And now Pomfret plead excuse—a headache from a second helping of the curried eels that swarmed the moat—and sought, as she said, her room. For a time the Duchess gazed at her cupid with the floating ribbon, and his hard arrow she turned against her heart.

Then an idea—a rarity for her—entered her head.

She seeks a shawl. She thrusts her slippers into new galoshes. Black night is on the window. Is the woman mad? She runs along the darkened corridor. She climbs with quickened puff the circular stairs of stone. She issues on the battlements.

It is a night of stars and flying clouds, but she comes with darker purpose. She listens. A faint rumor of horses' feet beats upon the stillness of a far-off road. It is her unfaithful lord returning from the war, with thoughts doubtless on the boot-closet where first Pomfret had been kissed. The Duchess stands in a shad-

owed cranny of the wall and leans forward to the silent waters of the moat. How fitting to end it all, with those dull sounds of horse for a muffled drum of death! Wildly beats her heart.

And now she is conscious that she is not alone. There is a cloaked figure in the other cranny of the wall. Can it be—? The Duchess steals forward in her new galoshes. It is. Her eye grows red upon the darkness of the night.

It is so, dear Rollo, that hatred is engendered in the heart. Never, never let your passions rise!

"See," says Bill, "that is the very tower, the one at the corner with the crenelated top."

And now fierce anger sweeps upon the Duchess. She leaps forward with a cry. She seizes her enemy by the knees. She tugs and heaves! But her victim is too heavy. Ah! Here is a hole where oil is poured against assault. With sly cunning she drops her burden. She stuffs her in. For a moment Pomfret's plumpness thwarts her. Shall waffles save a life? The Duchess rests both galoshes on her head. She stamps her down. A splash!

The ripples widen into circles. The dull pounding of horses' hoofs is a muffled drum.

"And here is a poignant touch to finish," says Bill. "When the body was found next day it was a nest—a nest of eels—eels like those the Duchess had eaten curried. And so she and the Duke were married and lived happily ever afterward. But from that time on his Grace confined himself to tripe."

Bill was so proud of his plot that henceforth on our

travels he was forever inventing a Pomfret-Dawken of some later generation to live in any castle that we saw. Nor did he hold her entirely to an ancient background. "Pomfret!" he would cry in a tone supposed to be that of Victoria at Balmoral, "Pomfret! Bring me out my purple turban! I'm off to church. Dawken! My lavender organdie, Disraeli comes to dine!" If any dumpy figure sat near us at tea or climbed to a bus top for a seat, Bill would nudge us and confide that this was a great-granddaughter of that older Pomfret of Bodiam who loved not wisely but too well.

We now paid a shilling at a cottage for admission and crossed the causeway of the castle. By God's mercy there was no guide to drone his story. Bill's had been enough. So we climbed the walls, ignorant and happy. A group of school children, meantime, were led around by a tutor whose moralizing finger pointed out a lesson; but we gave him a wide berth as one who plants a fester on a holiday.

These inner buildings are quite destroyed, but stumpy walls still show the outline of hall and armory and kitchen. Here and there a generous window opens from what must have been a lady's chamber, and its tracery showed it to be of the fourteenth century. And I recall a pointed archway at the postern. I had been perplexed by the outer walls but the inside cleared the riddle and gave the clew to a later date.

We clambered down to a cellar where a round pool of black unhealthful water is fed from the moat outside. A filth of scum floated on the surface, and this is what they drank in time of siege. Fever must have been

stronger than any cannon to subdue the castle. It was a vaulted room of stone, black with the shadows of the past as if magic stirred a dirty mixture.

Black with the shadows of the past

We stood with unbent heads in the prodigious chimney of the kitchen. We climbed a tower and

leaned across the indented parapet to see the sluggish waters far below. Bill whispered as he drew us close. "Look!" And he pointed to a dizzy hole that opened at our feet. "Here is the place where the Duchess stuffed Pomfret-Dawken through. She stuck in her wopse of petticoats, till the Duchess pressed her down."

The cruise of the Forget-Me-Not

CHAPTER IX

THE CRUISE OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT

WE now had lunch at a nearby inn. We asked for an omelet, and the landlady said she had heard of such things and would do her best. It proved to be a doormat—badly burned, as if already it had been used for dirty feet. We had walked this morning no more than six miles, but Bill had worked so hard on Pomfret-Dawken—or perhaps it was the doormat—that a general languor now seized his legs. He declared that he would collapse if he essayed the sixteen miles to Rye where we had hoped to pass the night.

As the captain of the tour I was ruminating on the problem and studying the map for a nearer town, when I observed that the Rother runs out to sea at Rye. And here we were on its upper course where, though it dwindled to a string, it still had depth.

"How about a boat?" said Beezer.

"Simpleberry, my very thought!"

So I cast about to find one. Presently a woman with one arm in a sling informed me that her husband owned a craft and that it was ours to Rye for an even pound. Her husband now arrived and together we went to the river where we found a rowboat quite filled with water and a hop-toad on the thwart beside the oars. We pulled the boat to the bank, emptied it and the captain clamped a gas engine at the stern.

"Not so bad," he said, when he had rubbed the mud from the seats with a pair of discarded trousers which he kept for the purpose in the locker. "I call her the Forget-Me-Not."

"Forget-Me-Not," said Bill, "Not so long, sweet ghost, as reason holds its seat."

The gas engine proceeded to cough from its single fretful lung and we climbed aboard.

Beezer was preoccupied and silent.

"What's the trouble?" I asked.

"I was thinking" he answered, "how Pomfret-Dawken was drowned. I couldn't eat an eel, not if I tried."

"Most delicious food," said Bill. "All persons who have moats scoop them up for dinner. Much cherished by the older aristocracy. A favorite dish of Lady Jane."

"Who was she?" asked Beezer.

"Ah," said Bill.

"'The Lady Jane was tall and slim,
The Lady Jane was fair. . . '

She was a lady of the Ingoldsby Legends. A tragic story with some humor. Very fond of eels she was.

Her husband was drowned. Was fished up a week later covered with them. Two in each pocket. Six in his boots!"

"And what did Lady Jane do?"

"She behaved abominably. She dined on the catch that night. So unlike the Duke I have been telling you of. Curried! Terrible! And this, Beezer—this is what she said afterward, when she folded up her napkin.

" 'Eels a many I've ate; but any
So good ne'er tasted before!
They're a fish, too, of which I'm remarkably fond—
Go—pop Sir Thomas again in the pond—
Poor dear!—HE'LL CATCH US SOME MORE!' "

"Horrible!" said Beezer.

"Ah, Rollo," said Bill, "she loved them, just as you love pink marshmallows. Cruel creatures, women! Be careful whom you invite to your school dances. And now be of better cheer! See how swiftly we travel through the water!"

The Rother, although it has the title of a river, is more like a canal that has lost its job and wanders out of work. It may, indeed, bear a current to the ocean but it is so sluggish that a fallen leaf scarcely moves, turning idly without a rudder. It loops through flat meadows with surface deep below the level of the grass, and it is only the taller scenery that peeps at you above—perhaps a village spire, a tree upon a hill or the heads of cattle that graze along the bank. A lane that is flanked by buildings gives as wide a view. And to travel on such a stream is to take a journey of close seclusion and of peace, with but the clouds for company.

I lay with my head upon a thwart at the bottom of the boat and, until a leak flowed in on me, I reclined in fitful sleep.

I was interrupted by our captain's voice.

"I say," he called, "Can't you pull about a bit?"

In front of us a coal barge lay obliquely across the stream and blocked the way. A plank had been thrown to a wharf and two men were unloading with wheelbarrows. In America, where all men are created equal for assault, this would have led to violent denunciation and rejoinder. But in England such matters are settled with a softer hand.

"I'll be back before supper," our captain added, "and I'll stand a treat of bitter for you and your mates."

And so the bargees heaved and pushed, until a little passage lay along the bank through which we squeezed.

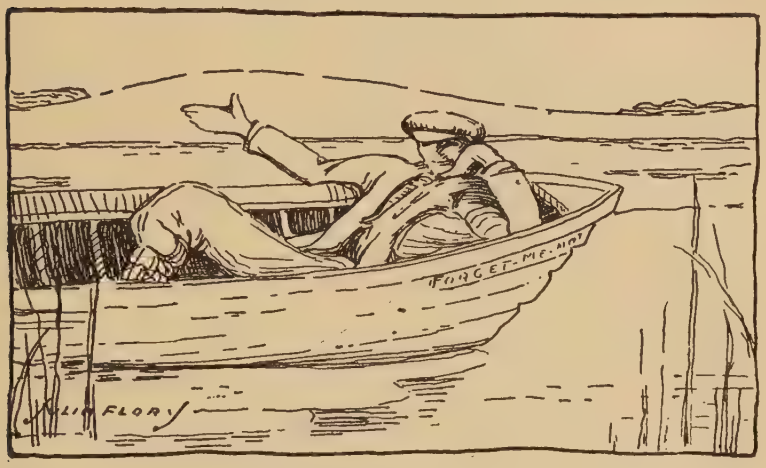
But the Forget-Me-Not had overdone its strength. It lay exhausted, too weak to cough. The captain did all the things that one does in such an emergency. He pulled at wires and squinted inside the invalid for any obvious complaint. "She never done this before," said he. Then he mopped his brow and lighted his pipe, as if meditation might provide a cure. We were to all appearance marooned in an extensive marsh that ended only with the hills. Several miles of squashy footing lay about us and we were dead at the center of it. Salt grasses waved at the margin of the river, but there were no cattle now or village towers.

The captain lifted out his pipe and spat gravely at the river. "It was just this afternoon I was sayin'

I'd clean that engine. And now look at the danged thing. Any hurry?"

"Time is made for slaves," said Bill.

There was a pair of oars, and with much knocking of the knuckles I rowed for a half hour. Nor do I see



"Time is made for slaves," said Bill

why oars are made to overlap. The captain, meantime, tinkered at the motor. Suddenly it started with a roar that showed a dirty disposition.

I burst into song:

"Yo ho! Yo ho! for a sailor's life,
For the wave and the driving wind!"

"What's that?" asked Beezer.

"I'm making it up as I go along," I answered. "The next lines will be harder, when I need a rhyme."

"Just so," said Bill.

But our troubles were not ended. We had not advanced more than three miles when the engine died

again. Nor could it be persuaded into further action. So the captain took the oars. He pulled with a fisherman's strong stroke and he knew each turn of the narrow winding stream without glancing across his shoulder.

"What happened to your wife's arm?" asked Bill.

"Broke in two places! Puttin' up curtains as weren't worth much anyhow! Had it set in Tonbridge! Three puns first and last was what it cost. She's worth it. I'd do a lot more'n that for her."

In an hour we had come to a bridge that carried a road to Rye, which was here four miles distant. And here we landed. At the edge of the marsh there was a village with an inn, and to it all four of us walked to cool the captain's thirst.

Thrice he thrust his face into three pints of beer. Thrice he wiped his mouth. Thrice he grunted with content. He capped the feast with a hunk of fruit cake. Then, without complaint at the twelve miles of exercise that awaited him, he thanked us for the beer, the cake and tip, wished us success upon our travels and with waving hand set off briskly to the river.

It was supper time when we passed through the Land Gate and entered Rye.

Bill had bought post cards of ruined Bodiam, so he sent one to America. "This is our inn," he wrote, "a quaint old hostelry—a little broken and a leaky roof. I have marked our rooms." At which he put a loop around a battlement. "This is Charles's apartment." Another battlement for Beezer. And then at a lonely window near the top where wind swept through, "My attic."

"Can we drink the water?" I asked the waiter at supper, "the water from the tap?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Some does. Some

My attic

doesn't," he said. "There ain't no reason, if I may say so, why one shouldn't, if he likes it."

Rye—now cut from the ocean by a wide stretch of sand

CHAPTER X

PAGES TO BE SKIPPED BY A HURRIED READER

THE English Channel in these last three hundred years has shifted its coast line by many miles, and most inconsistently. Rye, a seaport in the middle ages, is now cut from the ocean by a wide stretch of sand; whereas Winchelsea, its ancient neighbor—the parent of the present town—once likewise on the coast, is now buried beneath the water and fishing craft sail above its chimneys. It is perplexing how the ocean could have played such opposite tricks upon towns so close, and each trick so destructive.

And yet generally hereabouts the ocean has retreated. What were once harbors for herring boats are now a watery fen, and former fens are mostly dried to grazing land. The Isle of Oxney, four miles north of Rye across the marshes of the Rother, where yesterday we lay marooned, is still an island in the narrow letter of its definition because of a military canal and drainage

ditches; but it is ridiculously washed about with meadows more or less dry and is even without a distant view of broad water. But once these flats were open channels from the ocean and one might have sailed north from Rye up their shallow courses, steered around the island on a rising tide and dropped a cargo of illicit rum at Tenterden, ten miles inland. And all of this lower country shows that it was but lately rescued from the sea; for, like a swooning lady, it is clad in a dripping garment of watery meadows.

A newer Winchelsea was built back safe from the ocean on a hill to replace the older town, and now in its turn the newer town grows old. Rye gazes at the sea across its stretch of sand and dreams of braver days. For all of these seaports were rich in commerce until the shifting coast blocked them from their living.

Even in Roman times, when they were only obscure fishing villages, they were more or less concerned with the policing of the Channel. In Saxon days they put to sea against the Dane, although it was a vain attempt, and then in turn they served him when he had come to power. From the earliest times it was recognized that this southeast coast lay nearest to foreign enemies and the defense of England depended on the channel towns. But it was William the Conqueror who built a system of protection, who banded their ports in compact and levied men and ships against them. So long as Norman and Angevin influence was strong in France as well as England the Channel was little more than a domestic lake, but with the closing of the twelfth century Saxon and Norman had been

welded into peaceful English living and France was their common enemy. The thirteenth century brought a need of ships for war that fetched the Cinque Ports into power and prestige.

There were seven of the Five Ports—Hastings, Winchelsea, Rye, Dover, Hythe, Sandwich and Romney—and on them during the next four hundred years fell the duty of protecting England against invasion. During all that time there was no royal navy, as we would understand the word, but the seven ports supplied the King with a varying quota of ships as the prosperity and changing fortune of each permitted. It was an extempore fleet of fishing boats and coastal vessels at an average of twenty or thirty tons—one-masted boats with high prow and stern, manned by twenty men (boats which presently on the signing of a foreign truce would sail again for herring)—; and the charter of the towns provided that they must serve the King as he might direct fifteen days each year without pay, but that compensation be given for service beyond that number of days. If the King planned an expedition against France, if reprisals were needed on the sea to restore the nation's honor, it was these ports of Kent and Sussex which supplied the ships and sailors. We hear of their expeditions against the Scotch. With their aid Wales is conquered and a bridge of boats is thrown across the Menai Straits. They blockaded French ports and took the mounseer's loot from vessels on the sea. If a royal princess must be fetched or an ambassador set down abroad it was a fishing boat from one of these towns that was summoned for the task.

In return for such services as these the Cinque Ports were loaded with titles and distinction. They were declared free towns and given special privileges. Each freeman, whether of birth or election, might style himself a baron and walk among the sailors of London or East Anglia with proud uplifted nose. Literally he was but a fraction of a baron; for a single title had to serve the entire baronage and be divided among the freemen, but Yarmouth dared not sneer. Ships that passed the Five Ports were required to dip their colors. These towns owed no obedience to the jurisdiction of the shire, for they answered only to the Warden of the Channel who was a King's officer. They were exempt from outside tax and were free to trade in any English market. "They are to be quit," so runs an ancient charter, "on both sides of the sea throughout our whole land of tallage, passage, carriage, rivage, spondage, wreck, re-setting and all customs." And even if the reading of these exemptions brings to light that we do not know what some of the hard words mean (and Webster is almost as ignorant, for I have tried him), still we can guess that mighty privileges were conferred on the Cinque Ports for their guard upon the coast.

It must not be thought that England during these centuries was supreme upon the sea or that she dreamed of wide conquest to the corners of the map. It was not until the days of Elizabeth that England came to power, and before her time it was Spain, Portugal and Genoa from whose harbors there sailed the mightiest ships of war and commerce. In comparison to these more stirring ports the channel towns were engaged only in

trivial business that did but alternate between war and herring.

For if the southeast ports of England were her earliest defense the later and more glorious honors were with Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. It was from the western harbors that ships sailed forth in exploration that revealed the world. From the west English pirates sailed to attack Spanish galleons and colonies, and practiced a seamanship that was finally to defeat the Armada. And long before this time the southeast ports had grown too shallow for the heavier vessels that had come to use. For with wider sailing and with guns to replace the bow and arrow, larger ships were needed. Some of the older ports, like Rye, were already choked with sand by the shifting current of the Channel.

Rye stands on a great rock above the sand, with houses crowding up the slope and a church tower at the top that makes the town look as if it had been whittled to a point. Three lazy rivers meet below the rock and dawdle in a single sluggish channel to the sea. There is a golf course now upon the sand.

Rye is a town where the streets rise so steep that a pedestrian upon the hill is always short of breath and nothing on wheels can get to the top at all, where houses have leaded windows on the sidewalk with glimpses inside of pewter and brass candlesticks, of generous fireplaces and the smoky beams of ancient hospitality. Often there is a step or so down to their front doors, as if in curiosity the street had acquired the habit of standing up on tiptoe with nose pressed against the glass for a better view of these friendly rooms.

It is a crowded town. No house is large. They sit close, with cramped elbows against their neighbors. No street is wider than the necessity of a lazy traffic. The sidewalk of the high street may hold two persons side by side, but on lesser streets if two companions walk together one of them must straddle the gutter or go behind.

Rye is a town where one expects to see old ladies in lace caps taking their tea at four o'clock, with a tawny cat yawning on a cushion in the sun. The making of lace jabots and crazy quilts must still be in fashion here. Perhaps white stockings are yet in favor, because the old queen wore them years ago. Any chance pedestrian will be bent with rheumatism if a native, or if he be a stranger it is likely that he will carry an easel and a stool and be looking for a half-timbered front to sketch.

It is a town where streets are called Watchbell Street and Traders' Lane, where any warehouse looks as if it might be the lodging of a grandmother without a worldly purpose, so divorced it seems from business. Single ladies of withered circumstance clutter up a parlor with blue china and crockery cats, and suspend a placard of antiques inside the window as a bait for strangers. Authors engage a room to write a masterpiece. Painters punch a window to the north for steady light. Tired folk still in trade wish that they might live here in an ancient house and let the eight-twenty and Watling Street go hang. And they say that house-agents at Rye lead all day a string of these discontented strangers about from door to door.

Henry James and Arthur Benson had houses at Rye.

A hundred artists and authors live about the square at the top of the town, and doubtless other masterpieces are under way. There is an esplanade below the castle walls where one may walk in full view of the

Watchbell Street

ocean, and another terrace to the southwest with Winchelsea and Camber in the distance. On the first of these I sat for an hour in the sun; but to the latter I came at twilight, and I left at once for I had broken on the privacy of lovers. It was my embarrassment

rather than theirs; for each face shut out entirely the other's view, and cheek to cheek they were alone.

There is a church to be seen at Rye, and an old gate, and a castle with its ancient threat toward France.

But no sight is quite so interesting as our own hotel, the Mermaid Inn. This was built almost five hundred years ago and served as an inn until the latter part of the eighteenth century. About thirty years back it was restored to hotel use, and each season its owners pull down a ceiling of modern plaster and lay bare the black timbering of ships which served the King in wars with France when cannon were a novelty. Most of the plaster is now removed, but there are several rooms with surface unexplored. Nor is it certain that closets and steps may not be still concealed in some unnoticed thickness of the wall. For it is a building of unexpected stairways, of change of level that skulks for mischief in the shadows, of corridors kinked with indecision. One must enter a doorway with a stoop. The beams reach down to crack the head. One stairway, at least, is of narrow pie-shaped steps cut thin for indigestion, and it winds upward so steeply that one climbs with his hand on the tread in front.

There is a place of hiding above the lounge hearth. Tradition has it that barrels of smuggled rum were stored here, but another legend says that Jesuit priests lay in concealment to escape the scaffold. There is a sunny corner room with leaded windows deeply furred where Queen Elizabeth slept, and from it a secret staircase climbs inside the wall about the fireplace to issue to an upper closet where a well dropped to a tunnel that

extended beneath the town. And about this, too, there were tales of smuggling.

For if Rye spent its brave youth sending ships on the King's business, its shrewd maturity was given to the fetching of rum from France and avoiding the King's officers. Smuggling seems to have been a chief industry all along the coast, nor did one of this profession appear to sacrifice dignity or social station. Roustabouts, it is true, rolled the dirty kegs upon the beach, but the captain waxed his mustachios and took snuff from a silver box. If caught he would be hanged, a blot on a fastidious escutcheon to be sure, but the profits were big and the adventure tempting. Dead, the village made a song of him and wove legends around his romantic life.

Perhaps in America a next generation will see our own brave rum-runners in the diamond circle of the opera. Or nursery tunes will be composed of hair-breadth danger on the cloudy Jersey coast.

It was on a dark December night
When Ike the Jew and Nigger Jim
Went sailing out without a light
To fetch the precious bottles in.

Preachers, merchants and other leading citizens seem always to have aided the smugglers in any brush with the excisemen. There is a story that one of these preachers was knocked up at night by a neighbor whose load of rum was hard pressed by officers. He opened the village church and the two rolled in the tubs and hid them in the pews. Next day was Sunday so he took to bed, having first nailed a notice on the door that he was nigh to death

and that the usual service would be omitted. Our own church is yet too prim for this display of mercy.

Smugglers were of two trades—sailors who fetched the kegs from France and the runners who received them on the beach and bore them up to London. Both trades had their dangers, and yet the risk upon the sea was slight against the other. A ship can hide its lantern and be swallowed in the night. The pounding of waves, a fog, a cloudy sky, are its protection. Even if discovered it can lift a sail and run to France for shelter.

But a land smuggler invites suspicion by waiting with his carts upon the shore. He must show his light for signal and reveal himself to enemies. He must roll the tubs up above the tide—a noisy business if the night be quiet—, he must put them into hiding. There may be no pounding waves to drown his sounds of labor, no wide spaces to guard him from surprise. His wagons are a sullen target in the dark. Every village through which he passes must hear the creaking of his wheels, and any nose pressed on a window will guess the cargo that he carries. Safety depends on connivance in his crime. Kipling's Smugglers' Song preserves the attitude of this countryside through which the rum was brought at night.

If you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet,
Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in the street,
Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie.
Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by.

Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark;

Brandy for the Parson,
'Baccy for the Clerk;
Laces for a lady; letters for a spy,
And watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by.

This is, of course, better than the ballad of Nigger Jim; but we are still a young country, without the old world's touch of culture.

On every road upward from the coast there were friendly houses where rum could be hidden through the day. Holes were dug in a corner of a garden with brush to cover. Perhaps an extra cellar opened from a secret trap in the planking of a floor. Or the boarding of a kitchen ceiling could be pulled aside to expose an unexpected attic beneath the roof, with a hoist for lifting kegs. Some of these houses spread a rumor that they were haunted, but it was merely to lay suspicion when lights were seen at night or any noise was heard of tubs unloaded.

Here at the Mermaid is a hiding-place for rum. We shall see an attic for the same purpose at Pevensey. There is a secret storeroom at the inn at Lewes. These are instances at random. Land smugglers of easy purse were once the best patrons of these southern inns and all things must have been done to insure the safety of their journey north.

It was the bookkeeper who took us around the Mermaid and pointed out the sights. She was an attractive youngster, unspoiled as yet by devotion to her ledger; and all four of us went upstairs and down

to every unoccupied room and tapped on suspicious walls to find an undiscovered passage. Bill, of course, knocked his head on many beams and stumbled on hidden steps. I would hear a thud and "Oh, my soul!" He was, however, so taken with the inn despite his wounds, that he plans to return to Rye when old age shall creep upon him and engage Queen Elizabeth's room in which to end his days. Nor does the Mermaid rely too entirely on its beauty and ancient use. The food and service were excellent, and the beds moderately flat.

We went to the pictures in the evening—as the English say—, a movie of Alaska. All of these movies that infest England are of American manufacture. They are played by American actors—that is, by Jews—and the scenery is ours. The factories of Hollywood, even if their employees give too much time to night-life, have now reached a production that is ample for the world. I cannot say much for the merit of the output, but it is a strange thing that British children should grow so familiar with our New York buildings, with Pullman sleeping cars, the Rockies, cowboys, Trust presidents of heavy jaw and our waving fields of grain. It is safe to say that a child of Devon or the north knows less of London than he does of San Francisco. I am told that children even of Siam have more intimacy with New York than with—than with whatever towns they have out there. The gifted actress who performed at Rye was our phenomenon, Baby Peggy, and she acted with such skill as I anticipated.

Nor is it alone the American movie that invigorates

the eastern world. I understand that our jazz carries also a message to jaded Europe, that our saxophone goes on a brilliant tour all around the world. These things threaten the bathtub for supremacy, so long our pinnacle of culture. A traveler becomes proud of his national accomplishment when he hears our precious tunes everywhere abroad. Let him sit at Como and a tinkling rhythm for happy tourists hits his ear. If he seek a hotel buried in the mountains where ruined castles rise, a disk of jazz is there before him to soil the night. It was *Bananas* two years ago, the *Back Porch* last year, and this year it has been *Tea for Two* and that other little gem, *I Want to be Happy.* Before this book can hurry to the press there will be another masterpiece ready for the summer—"Thanks for the Buggy Ride," perhaps. But I shall be true to my first affection and rank *Bananas* at the top, as I heard it once sung by four colored gentlemen in a blaze of gin at a dance hall on Montmartre. It is to an American tune that men grow drunk all round the world.

We had bought a paper sack of cherries to reinforce the show. I told Beezer not to scatter the stones about, but to put them in his pocket. He bettered my instruction by dropping them in Bill's.

"My sainted grandmother," Bill exclaimed, "what have we here?" when he thrust his fingers into the sticky mass.

Two Englishmen sat in front of us and, presently, tiring of Baby Peggy's silly antics, they turned a shoulder on the play and talked with us. Like ourselves, they were walking through the country and had come

up that day from Hastings. The elder of these was a University man—of the upper middle class, as he explained—, engaged in the mining or manufacture (whichever is correct) of nitrates in Peru, a job which had taken him several times around the world. He was a bit of a John Bull, accustomed to pushing things brusquely from in front of him; and although he was friendly to America and cordial to ourselves he had the air of engaging us in battle. We were to him undoubtedly a green product, of strange, flat and nasal speech—talking his own language, it is true, but as one might expect to hear it on some forgotten island of the sea.

"How were you so quick to know that we are foreigners?" I asked.

"Twang!" he answered. "And then you pronounce some words incorrectly."

"What words?"

"Come, I say, that isn't fair. Well, pătent instead of pātent. Invalid and not *invaléed*. *Eether* instead of either."

"Pătent is correct enough in America."

"But it isn't English."

"Who says so?" I asked. "Just because the language started in your little island you have no monopoly of authority. One is more usual with us and the other with you. Sometimes when a word travels it changes its pronunciation, and good usage there makes it right."

"It is pronounced better here."

"Very likely. But how about your Norman English? Didn't you alter the French to suit your tongue? It

was wrong at first until time made it right. It's beef not *bœuf*, mutton not *mouton*. No nation has so garbled foreign words. Right here in Rye Ypres Castle is called *Wipers*. And in Rye Wipers is correct. Pătent is our *Wipers*."

"But America thinks she talks English. We know we don't talk French."

"Call it what you will! If America had arisen before the days of easy travel, we would gradually have acquired a language of our own. The difference is slight because of frequent steamboats. In general now we follow your lead."

"Why?"

"Because your culture is the better. If ever you lose your supremacy in that to us, it will be our standards that have the greater force. Whichever nation produces the Shakespeares and Miltons of the future will have the higher authority. But if that time ever comes, your insular patter will be right—for you. And pătent is now right for us."

Our acquaintance observed that the future of the world depended on the friendship between Britain and ourselves, but he added frankly that he did not like us. We were so swanky.

"What's that?" I asked.

"You brag so much of your motor cars, your hotels, your wealth and all that." He turned to his companion. "My friend and I" he added, "stayed away from the Mermaid because we wished to escape Americans. *Amuricans*, you say it. *Amuricans!* I suppose that is right, too."

"My friends and I" I answered, "are, of course, illiterate. Our better people say Americans. You avoided *Amuricans* at the Mermaid. And then you met some of them in a movie." I laughed.

"In a cinema," he corrected. "And whenever you have seen enough of this horrid picture (My God, you send us beastly pictures!)—when you have seen enough let's go over to my hotel and have a drink!"

We assented.

"Your cinemas" he persisted, "make us trouble in the Orient. They teach the natives unnecessarily what cheats and liars we are—you are, that is, but the natives mix us up. They used to look on the English as persons superior to themselves, persons whose orders must be obeyed; but the pictures tell them that we are swine, and little by little they are coming to believe it. I am serious. The American cinema is bad enough at Rye, but here it only bores you and you may stay away. In the Orient it creates unrest and puts the English rule in jeopardy."

"Revolution in India." I laughed. "The police are seeking Baby Peggy. A bit silly, isn't it?"

"In far-off towns" he continued, "there may be but a handful of white persons living among ten thousand natives—yellow, black or brown. And these few persons are just as safe as a lion-tamer in his cage. The lions would like to eat him, but they do not dare. There is something of authority in his eye, and a sharp stick in his hand. And the British women! Sex unrestraint is as usual in much of the Orient as it was in the days when the Arabian Nights was written. And the

colored race seeks the white. The protection of white women rests on the belief that British women are sacred, that a native who violates one of them must die for it. Whether it is by her consent is no matter. This tradition has been built up through a century or so. Without it, no white woman would be safe in many of the outlying stations of the Empire. And then a cinema from Hollywood comes to town. God! Mack Sennet's Bathing Beauties! So these are the sacred women of the west—these girls who caper naked and are pawed and mauled. It's a dirty business and white women pay for its profits."

We walked through the silent streets of Rye, snarling pleasantly at one another. He did not like the French. No honesty! They would not pay their debts, would not even try to pay them. England, by God, he said, would pay hers. If America would make a stand against Germany, Italy and France, she would do better than pecking at England. And yet, despite his brusqueness, I liked him. Bill was less tolerant. He kept nudging at me to land him one.

A local law forbade the Englishman's hotel from serving liquor to those who were not staying in the house, so we were given ginger beer while our hosts took Scotch. They accepted it with but a slight murmur of regret and with a lack of resourcefulness toward a remedy that seemed apparent. And then all five of us went to the Mermaid, which seemed in happy ignorance of the law.

For an hour we sat in the oak-timbered back parlor and told one another of our national defects and per-

versities. He accused us of a flat and open A, and of an R that was burred like a file. So we asked him why he pronounced raspberries as if it were spelled *rawsbriz*, with a sustenuto on the *raw*. He told us that we spoke an E as if it were a U. Library, we retorted, not *labri*. He charged us with excessive slang, but failed to catch us. He insisted that we were now speaking guardedly against a slip. And of the general instances that he gave, many of them are used in America only in the gutter. It would be as unjust, we urged, to charge an English gentleman with a cockney H. *Cheerio*, we hurled back, *old thing!*

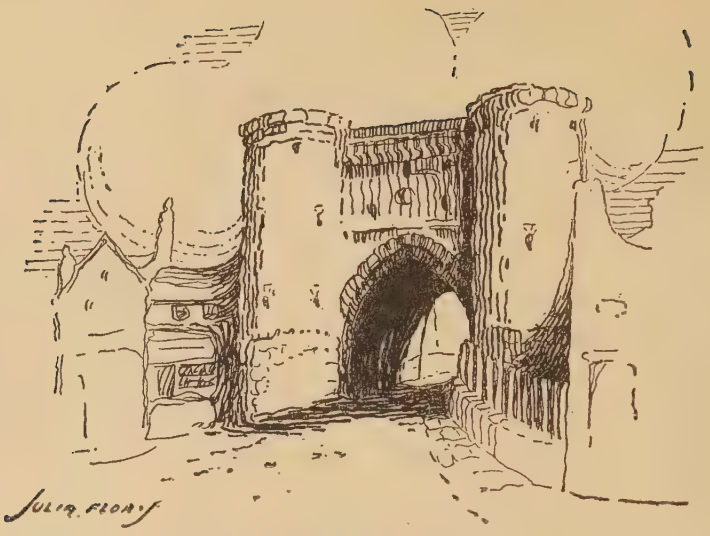
"Why do you wear straw hats and horn-rimmed glasses?" he asked.

"Because we prefer them to monocles and spats," we answered.

He countered this by calling us a nation of wartime profiteers, a people who bought its culture from abroad.

At times it was almost a stormy evening, and once or twice negotiations nearly cracked. But all of us felt the better to air our spleen. And, although some of the truths were unpalatable, the drink was excellent.

He was rather an engaging fellow and we sat until the hour was late. He gave us his card and asked us to look him up in London. Nor did the bookkeeper complain, although we had kept her up till one o'clock to lock the door.



Landgate at Rye

CHAPTER XI

CONTAINING A BURST OF SONG

FOR a day we walked about the narrow streets of Rye. Grass grows in the cobbles, but this is said by bustling rival towns to be planted to stress an accent on the town's unworldliness. We climbed the Traders' Lane where certainly artists live at the high windows that look upon the sea. A door or so is painted blue and there are open skylights for the escape of bursting passion. There is, moreover, a delightful, rickety aspect of disorder—an outside stairway like a flying buttress across a lower roof, landings where genius can get its breath, areas where talent sweats in a basement for a penny—a touch of something that is foreign and smacks of Italy.

We rambled along the moldy fronts of Watchbell Street and I retain the memory of one house older than its fellows that sets up a claim it was once part of a convent building. Three steps lead downward to a hollow sill that is worn by sandaled feet, for the centuries have laid a thick coating on the street. Each wind drops a tiny burden until the deposit lifts the level of an ancient town. For Time is of Christian ritual, and it buries our human generations in its dust.

We poked up a narrow lane on a hint that John Fletcher had been born in a house somewhere at the top.

"And where is Beaumont?" asked Bill. "I always thought that he was Fletcher's twin."

But of him no mention. The building showed at the rear a decayed Tudor front, as it were; but the lane was too cramped for a view of it. Below the leaded windows there was a wretched little yard where a yellow dog nosed among the ash cans. We stood for a minute with heads thrown back at a painful paralytic angle, then checked the house as something seen.

We lounged about the church square, which is as snug a spot of quiet retirement as one could find in England. This, I fancy, is the abode of authors; and books, no doubt, of a dreamy sort are here still written with a quill. They say that once a pawnbroker hung his triple symbol at one of these doors. Did he think to catch a profit in the poverty arising from a rejected manuscript, or from a watch hung up until the day of royalty? Had the fellow no feeling of his business that he pushed his way among his victims? But the harsh

suggestion of his sign so lost its meaning in the peaceful street that slim authors out of purse thought it but a decoration divorced from their necessity. Of a consequence trade fell off until he was forced to remove his shop and set it for dirtier money among the sailors on the wharves.

We peered into windows wherever householders were good enough to leave their curtains up. And were I mayor of Rye, in recognition that these old rooms are properly the museum of the town, I would refund the tax to such persons as show their treasures thus without a fee to strangers.

We attended an exhibition of resident artists, held in a barnlike room that had once been Henry James's study. We sat on the terrace above the sands and thought how this expanse was once a harbor dotted with fishing craft which was accustomed, on the bidding of the King, to lift their anchors and sail against his enemies.

And then I lay down at the Mermaid for a nap, and listened to two fellows with a guitar and rough sour voices out of tune who sang in the street below on the chance of pennies. The intention of their serenade was Italian, but a northern fog quite filled the air. The song was about someone in the pangs of unrequited love who kept repeating mournfully in the chorus "I'm dreamin' by the stream, of you, sweet Nellie Deane," which he appeared to think a satisfactory rhyme to move the young lady's heart. By good fortune I was able to drop a handful of pennies which grazed his nose, and love's lament was suspended in the scramble.

Bill and Beezer, meantime, were absent at a fair and concert given for charity in the fields below the town, but they reported nothing for my notes except that the booths were served by young ladies in quaint

The intention of their serenade was Italian

old costume. There was a Maypole dance performed not as with us by children, but by adults. Also ginger beer, warm and stale.

After we had paid our bill we sat with the lady-manager and her enthusiastic bookkeeper in their private office while all of us smoked cigarettes, and I

promised them that I would make a record in my book that the Mermaid topped all the hotels upon our travels. And so it did. The timbered ceilings, leaded windows, its great fireplace in the smoking room, the rambling corridors, the courtyard with its basin of tinkling water, were of pleasant invitation—and added to these attractions there was the wish to please a patron, a courtesy unspoiled. Our hostess sat in easy comfort with her feet stretched across an extra chair, flicking her ashes toward the hearth.

And so to bed, well pleased with Rye—its busy past and the present life upon the streets.

On the following morning, Wednesday the twenty-second of July, I arose for an early breakfast when the inn still blinked with sleep and last night's crumbs were on the cloth. And so I took to the road alone—twelve miles to Hastings—, for Bill and Beezer had elected to sleep late and loll across by char-à-banc like pampered tourists.

And sometimes for contrast it is well to walk alone. For, if the start be when the hour is fresh, some exultant thought may meet you at a crossroad and fall as a comrade into step. If dew is still upon the grass it is of shrewd persuasion to the brain to reflect the sparkle. Or any bird may pitch the key for random reverie. In an early hour of summer it is of the essence to walk alone and let the fancy scamper as it will. An open road is so secure against intrusion. A stretch of lonely miles holds a leisure that induces meditation and you are released to a land without a barrier. The tap of your footstep, if the stride be deliberate and long, is

rhythm for quiet utterance. Then, if ever, the brain is host to a company of thought too shy to gather in a noisy hour.

Hazlitt, in one of his essays, has noted this. "I cannot see the wit" he writes, "of walking and talking at the same time." And he adds, "Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths." There was a touch of perversity in Hazlitt, I confess,—a mood now and then of quarrel that made him an uncertain comrade—; yet this essay is of such a gracious fabric, so packed with wholesome meditation, so apt of phrase to common thought, that no man if he plans to walk alone should make his start without glancing at its page. "I like solitude," he continues, "when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

. . . . 'a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet.'"

For ordinary opinion we may set Sterne against him. "Let me have a companion of my way, were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines." But now and then in contrast it is well to heed the advice of Hazlitt and to walk alone. For if three men go together there comes an hour when one or another of them will prattle too many words and break the sounds of country life that are a proper background for a silence. Thought can seldom find a sentence to ex-

press its meaning. It is of gossamer texture whose slender thread is torn in the handling of a conversation.

And so all morning I tramped alone in joyful mood.

But, although I recall this jubilation on the road from Rye, I cannot find any touch of wisdom in my notes. It had perished like the song of birds across the meadows, like the wind that blew from off the ocean with its rumor of buried Winchelsea. There are, indeed, certain scratchings of rhyme that indicate I tried my hand at making melancholy verses; for it is in such high moods that one runs joyfully to sadness. Youth writes tragedy because it is untouched by care and ignorant of pain, because life is so vivid at its dawn that death is but a pleasant ghost of dreams. This morning I was of an equal age with Peter Pan. And so I wrote:

Where flies the light when the candle's out?
And where lies love that is dead?
For one recalls and the other forgets
The word and the hour that has fled.
And the one who holds the hour in thought—
The word that has sped so fast—
Must bury it deep beyond the light
And hide it in the past.
Where flies the light when the candle's out
And shadows lie thick on the heart?
And oh, my dear, you have gone away,
And a lonely hour is dark.

Evidently, however,—for I have searched my notebook—my genius spent itself at this point, for my scratchings went no farther. And I have often won-

dered if poets address their verses always to a real woman. For in practice, as here on the Hastings road, they must sometime in extremity conjure up a lady out of nothing to fit their wares.

And now, at home among my books, my measures seem to resemble other and better verses of a better poet. "When the lamp is shattered the light in the dust lies dead." Plagiarism surely cannot be judged a mortal sin when one advances so blithely and so innocently to the theft. So with rhymes and happy sadness I beguiled the lowland that lies along the ocean and climbed at last a hill to a stone gate-tower that guards the approach to Winchelsea.

Winchelsea, although it lies broadly in the sun, has yet an air of melancholy, as if it still wore a black ribbon on its arm for its parent buried in the sea. This calamity befell the older city in the year twelve hundred and fifty. "On the first day of October," Holinshed writes, "the moon, upon her change, appearing red and swelled, began to show tokens of the great tempest of wind that followed, which was so huge and mightie, both by land and sea, that the like had not been lightlie knowne, and seldome, or rather never heard of by men then alive. The sea forced contrarie to his natural course, flowed twice without ebbing, yeelding such a rooring that the same was heard (not without great woonder) a farre distance from the shore. Moreover, the same sea appeared in the darke of the night to burne, as it had been on fire, and the waves to strive and fight togither after a marvellous sort, so that the mariners could not devise

how to save their ships where they laie at anchor, by no cunning or shift which they could devise."

Nor was Winchelsea alone destroyed. It is said that the salt spray was thrown in the tempest so far inland "that the next year's crops declined to grow, nor would the leaves of the trees and hedges put forth their full foliage."

Unlike Rye, the streets of Winchelsea are broad with much space for trees to arch above. The houses are not huddled with a neighbor's elbow in the ribs, but everywhere there is room for gardens. If Rye is crowded with houses that stand a tiptoe for the view, Winchelsea is of generous dimension, for the hill on which it stands is more than ample for its accommodation. Both of these towns took their rise from commerce and were of a burgher population of free privilege, unlike such places as Arundel which sprang from feudal circumstance under the eye of an aristocratic castle. Rye is still a busy market town with its remnant of wharves and shallow shipping on the river, but Winchelsea sits marooned upon its wooded upland and its thought turns entirely to the past. In the church that sets in its acre of softest turf there is a tomb of Gervase Alard who was Admiral of the Cinque Ports and a sailor of great repute in ancient battles.

Ellen Terry owns a cottage at Winchelsea and spends her summers here. I noticed a placard announcing that she was to recite at a garden fête for charity. And it happened that a friend of mine, coming here later, heard her and had the pleasure of paying his respects to this actress whose genius overtopped Henry Irving in

so many plays. Her eyes fail, he says, and she had difficulty in reading from a manuscript.

Thackeray lived once in a house alongside the graveyard and wrote Denis Duval here. Under a large tree in this same graveyard John Wesley preached his last sermon.

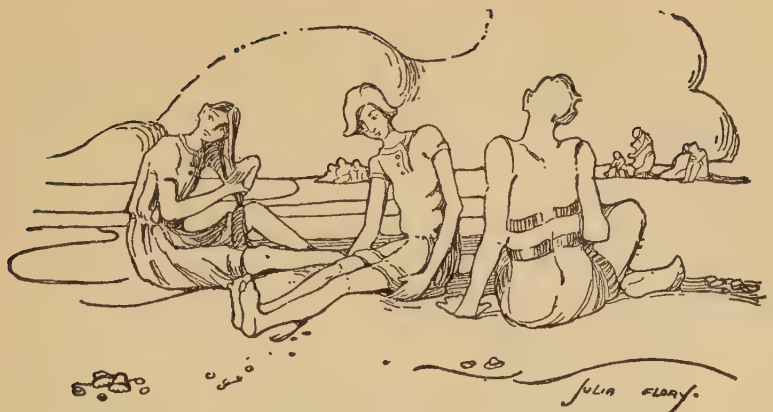
A broad avenue leads around the church, and this I followed with a glance across my shoulder at the building's beauty. The branches arched overhead, to remind travelers that Gothic took its start with nature.

There is a sharp descent at the edge of town and for two hours I walked on a low ridge between the ocean and the marshes of the river Brede. In front of me lay the purple wall of the Downs, which plunges at Hastings to the sea to rise again in France in a similar ridge of chalk. And now my happy songs were quite forgotten in fatigue and I lay wagers with myself whether motors with an even number of passengers would exceed those with an uneven number—for this is a roadside cribbage for pedestrians who go alone when the brain grows dull. As the morning wore on a rising traffic thickened up my count.

And now a stone tower, that had signaled to me in the early morning and had been lost awhile, popped up beside me on a hill; for at last I had spanned the lowland by the sea.

At the town of Ore I was well up on the Downs, and from here to Hastings I walked through a broken two miles of scattered and unpleasing houses, with ginger beer for refreshment at a tavern by the road. A shabby street of boarding houses and cheap shops

plunged down the hill, and I was on the beach. A thousand awkward legs were taking the air in nature's raiment, and five thousand toes were buried in the sand. I had walked the twelve miles in less than three hours and I sat down hard at a corner restaurant where tables were exposed upon the curb. "Waitress," I bawled, "fetch me quick a pint of stout!"



Few ships today are lost upon the sandy British coast

CHAPTER XII

TEN THOUSAND LEGS ABOVE THE SEA

OUR bodies shrink upon a mountain and yet on any lofty peak there comes an increase to the stature of our souls. Our minds here reach out beyond their usual grasp and run to the edge of nature; and Orion, despite its vastness, finds a lodging in the cabin of the eye. For, although we are a speck unnoticed, too small to be measured against the sky, yet we are endowed with an inheritance that builds castles in the twilight of a fancy, that finds beauty and a reason in the sun, the clouds and wind, the shifting color of the earth; that threads a pathway across a field of stars and knocks for answer on the black and sightless wall that bounds the universe. It has been written that we lift up our voice unto the hills whence comes our help, and here aloft in humility of spirit we stand at God's communion. A prospect from a head-

land upon troubled water has this gift, also, for us, although in slighter measure, or a storm at sea with green waves that break to white.

But whereas mountains always lift us to majestic thought where we humbly worship a God that is beyond our logic, the sea as we behold it from a beach lowers our aspiration by its condescending and familiar aspect. It stretches a smooth surface to the shore and asks us to be its equal. It tosses up a laughing ripple to the sand and bids us share its idle game. But we are the creatures of nature and not its equal; and all of our vast invention, though it seeks to make us master, is but evidence that proves our littleness. And so, when the sea takes us for a comrade, our souls sink again to pettiness in the losing of their Maker.

This is all quite absurd, yet I have observed that nowhere do men and women show such crudity as on a beach. It is not entirely that their scanty dress reveals their starkness and deformity. Nor is it wholly that a holiday betrays how barren are their brains when free of accustomed business. Yet if a man goes without his tailor and the dull routine of his week, half of our civilization seems swept away.

Nor can I be persuaded, from my knowledge of the present beach, that any siren of antiquity, unbrushed and dripping from the water, really charmed a sailor to destruction. In beauty there is required a touch of art. No lady can subdue a heart when her hair hangs wet in strings. Few ships today are lost upon the sandy British coast.

Any creature on the shore at Hastings, if led by him-

self apart and given pants or skirt as fit the sex, would doubtless show a spark of vivid inner life; but when ten thousand sprawl together with outstretched legs they are but the final sorting of a discard. And America should not take comfort, for our watering places of popular resort are almost as bad. But Englishmen of the tripper class lack teeth or are possessed of yellow fangs. They are leathery and wrinkled even in their youth, as if thriftless nature wove their skins too big. On them the mighty Tailor laid no tape. Their joints are stiff and knotted with damp living. Their women are of scrawny figure, and their faces—let's be frank—often their faces resemble those of horses. Their bathing costumes do not fit and the shabby cloth that hangs so loosely on the job appears to apologize for the raw material that is stuffed inside.

Nor do these bathers seem to enjoy their sport. There is little laughter or merriment. Voices are not lifted in a jest or song. Races are not run upon the beach or water splashed. Small groups sit about in dismal toothless circles, as if a holiday came but once a year and its use were quite forgotten in the interval. Men and women, it is true, make love openly, cheek to cheek; but their stifling rapture drives away all trace of thought, and they sit hand in hand with stupid faces, without a word to be shared between them, alone among the crowd. If love be violent, he is moved to muss her hair, and she accepts his passion by stuffing sand inside his shirt. Hastings, alas, is not the magic casement of the poet that opens on the foam.

Is it any wonder, when the bathing hour is done, that

the disgusted tide runs out? Surely the moon, its guide in any ordinary ebbing,—surely the moon, which has winked for a thousand years upon a stolen kiss, has had no hand in such a sordid love or fetches here the water in or out. If it snapped its fingers at its usual task and went off on more profitable business at Deauville across the Channel, the ocean would be just as nimble to escape the clutter of these arms and legs. The Channel has a bad reputation for a testy temper, but I lay it to the crowd at Hastings. It is a porter who has swept all day at a dirty beach, then runs to the bar outside to make a drunken night of it.

After I had stood on the beach in haughty isolation among the trippers and had composed with disjointed nose this apostrophe to pyorrhea and uric acid, I sought a table at the sidewalk, ordered a pint of stout and persuaded the waitress—a creature with slapping heels and a jaw that worked upon a wad of gum—to sop up from the table the remnant of a former feast. And here I stretched out my legs in as much comfort as was afforded by a spindling iron chair that held no compromise with the cushions of the body. For with softer persuasion patrons might sit too long and rob the shop of new customers.

And here to me came Bill and Beezer to my great amazement. Rosy-fingered Morpheus, it seems had clambered from their beds shortly after I had departed from my breakfast, so they had caught an earlier bus than was intended. They had thought to overtake me on the road and they were in high admiration of my speed. Bill's gullet roared for stout, so down they sat

with me on spindling chairs and beckoned to Miss Wrigley for extra pints.

"And where now?" said Bill, when he came up for breath.

It had been our plan to eat lunch at Hastings and then walk six miles to Battle Abbey in the early afternoon with a glimpse of Senlac by the way where William defeated Harold. For I had been in Hastings before and I had hardened against the town as an abode for the night.

Did not Charles Lamb once write an essay entitled "The Old Margate Hoy" wherein he told of a dismal holiday on this very beach? "We have been dull at Worthing one summer," he wrote, "duller at Brighton another, dullest at Eastbourn a third, and are at this moment doing dreary penance at—Hastings!" Surely no landlady leaves a copy of Elia on her smoke-room shelves. A lukewarm guest whose inclination wavers toward the mountains or the city for a change might strike on such a paragraph as this: "I love town, or country;" cried Elia, "but this detestable Cinque Port is neither. . . . I cannot stand all day on the naked beach, watching the capricious hues of the sea, shifting like the colors of a dying mullet. I am tired of looking out at the windows of this island-prison. I would fain retire into the interior of my cage. While I gaze upon the sea, I want to be on it, over it, across it. . . . There is no sense of home at Hastings. It is a place of fugitive resort, an heterogeneous assemblage of sea-mews and stockbrokers. . . . If it were what it was in its primitive shape, and what it ought to have

remained, a fair honest fishing-town, and no more, it were something. . . ." And so "nature" he concludes, "where she does not mean us for mariners and vagabonds, bids us stay at home." I can fancy him in his sober suit of black, a clerk from India House, wandering listlessly upon the beach, homesick for the braver tide that flowed upward on the Strand when offices were shut.

"And where now?" repeated Bill, emerging for the third time like Venus from the foam.

Our plans for Battle Abbey were overthrown. Bill and Beezer, hounds with noses keen for the scent of music, had sniffed out a billboard announcing that on this very night there would be sung at Hastings "The Pirates of Penzance" by an all-star company direct from its London triumph before the King. And so in mercy I yielded to their excitement.

"All companies in England" I said, "are just from a triumph before the King."

"Hasn't the man anything else to do?" Bill asked.

"Pretty soft," said Beezer. "It means a free seat, of course."

"Naturally," I replied. "And one each side for a Duchess."

We thought the hostelries near by looked too thick with people. So we coasted down the plage under a frowning headland of great hotels and in half a mile we came to St. Leonards which is continuous to Hastings but is a suburb of quieter streets and a cleaner stretch of sand. It has an amusement pier of its own, but there are fewer slot machines, fortune tellers and penny shows

upon it. Hastings is largely for the tripper, with a shuttle of London char-à-bancs in and out; but St. Leonards, I fancy, draws a patronage that brings a trunk and pays for its lodging by the week—older folk, perhaps, who are stranded here when their city activity has ebbed. Nor had I guessed the dismal meaning which resides in that word *strand.* It is a town of widows whom Time consoles, and its shops must do a monstrous business in the sale of colored yarn and puppy biscuits.

Our landlady at the Mermaid had recommended a hotel and we found it a pleasant house of clean decay that catered to ancient ladies with lorgnettes and respectable but outlandish turbans.

"Look!" said Bill, as we entered. "That old lady's hat was bought for the coronation of the old Queen. It was then at the top of fashion."

And it was at lunch that he invented Mrs. Dycon. He had worked so long with Pomfret-Dawken that it was for variety he added a running-mate.

"She and Pomfret" he began, "were friends just so-so, and both of them were in attendance on Queen Victoria at Balmoral. There was always a bit of jealousy which of them would hand out stockings to the old lady. Dycon, cried the Queen, fetch me in my old rose. I'm off to church. And so I am afraid," continued Bill, "that Pomfret became a bit snooty, as we say."

Here at St. Leonards, by good luck at the table next to ours, we saw Pomfret and Dycon at their lunch. They were eating in that respectable method of mastication that is common among English dowagers of the gentler sort—a slight rotary movement of the lips and

then a little gulp that drops the morsel past the gullet. I fancied a sidelong glance at the lifting of the fork to see if anyone were watching this necessary grossness that nature has demanded.

Ours was a temperance house without a license, but that meant only an advance payment to the waiter who popped out around the corner and fetched the bottle. This waiter, except for a soiled shirt, was the pink of his profession, and he leaned forward with that correct crooking of the back which is acquired only by English servants. "And now, sir, a bit of cheese, sir!" That kind of waiter!

Bill had a cramped hall-bedroom, but Beezer and I were given one of such immensity that our twin beds seemed like little piers that jutted upon an ocean. There were great mirrors as in a ballroom, and a bay window that commanded a view of the sea. A family bath was down the hall, and at each of our ablutions the knob was tried four times on the outside with a little patter of feminine feet that faded off in disappointment.

After lunch I slept for an hour while Bill and Beezer went out for opera tickets. They returned with a paper sack of gooseberries—pronounced goozbriz here in England—but without tickets, for the house had been sold complete. The royal box only was left, but the price was high and our wardrobe was insufficient.

A brass band, however, was to play shortly on the pier, and so to the pier we wended our way with spirits alert for merriment. My sleep had so refreshed me that I now looked with a more tolerant eye on the legs

and arms that sprouted from the sand. These people, however sullenly they engaged in sport, thought at least that this was a joyful holiday; and doubtless it was an escape from the crowded streets of a London suburb. The ocean evidently had also dined well, for it had returned with a change of heart to toss its laughing ripples on the sand and cry aloud its invitation to the throng.

The pier is like those of Atlantic City—a creature of many legs like a centipede of strange amphibious habit that has crawled from the shore to shallow water and yet hesitates to swim. There is first a band stand with chairs for threepence and music of a jolly brassy sort. Here sat a great concourse—women chiefly at their knitting, dressed in the faded styles of before the war. Bill is getting an obsession about hats and he could not listen to the music because of his ranging eye. He urged me to give an entire chapter to the subject and its effect on the decline of marriage and the birth rate. And surely a courtship at Hastings must be undertaken in the dark, for even in the palest moon a man could scarcely lose his balance.

"Look at that toque!" said Bill. "The old dame bought it to wear at the opening of the Crystal Palace, and God knows when that was built."

"What's a toque?" I asked.

"That's one," said Bill.

"Where are the young girls of fresh complexions of whom one reads in novels?" I asked.

"*Où sont les neiges d'antan?*" said Bill, which of course closed the argument for I had to ask him to

translate. Glibly I read such phrases but my ear needs practice.

But he was back on hats.

"A hat upon a woman," he continued, "as it is the least necessary part of her attire, justifies itself only if it be beautiful. It is a crown, added for decoration. To other clothing, it is as the asparagus which, we are told, God made last among the fruits as the perfection of his handiwork."

And much of this!

Beyond the band stand there was a range of booths for the sale of cigarettes, soft drinks, novels of tempted but triumphant virtue, and gaudy jewelry for remembrance of a holiday. Here one could buy a work of art to be hung in his parlor or laid against an aspidistra plant—a polished shell of "Happy Days at Hastings"—to be shown to envious neighbors who were kept at home.

A photograph gallery showed beautiful creatures posing on a rock.

"Ah," I said, "are any of these ladies still at Hastings?"

Bill pressed close. "They delight my eye," he added. "Shall we hang about until the tide runs out?"

But the man shook his head. He had bought the pictures from a London jobber and the ocean in the background was a painted canvas. Had they been real, skippers along the coast would have strapped themselves that day against the mast.

Slot machines offered palm reading and fortune

telling—with a wife or husband, dark or fair, as fate decided. I tried my luck at this; but, by accident in my confusion—mistaking the proper slot—raw with inexperience—, I laid out my money for a husband. I drew one with a noble shock of hair and waxed

I laid out my money for a husband

mustache that I shall hope to be very happy with. It is a loss to some tender creature, deprived by me of mate.

There were wheels for trivial gambling with the ponies, where a swain might impress his lady with his recklessness upon the spending of a shilling. At another wheel there was a chance for a royal flush or string of aces with an onyx clock for prize. Or, for a penny, one

might peep at pictures of naked beauty—for this was the bait upon the sign—, although the pictures were neither naked nor beautiful. The little movie ended, as you turned the crank, just at the absorbing moment beside the tub when the lady still buttoned lifted up her foot. But at Hastings a maid is prodigal enough if she bares her beauty to the moon; nor would a jolt upon the crank dislodge a scandalous sequel.

And all the world is eager to know its weight, lest sugar tarts catch them unawares. A chair hangs upon a beam with compensating bars of metal which are thrown in a trough behind until the contrivance hangs even. A placard announces that these scales were used at the Derby for weighing ponies—or jockies, perhaps, for there would have been trouble in stuffing ponies in the chair. An expert stands ready to clasp a lady's arm or jest about her leg. He then proclaims his guess to the grinning crowd, with money refunded if the estimate is wrong.

An oriental personage who chews gum sells tickets to a booth inside of which there reposes a Princess of Siam, announced as traveling now in England on a holiday, who has consented to be seen for a contemptible sixpence only. "Ladies and Gentlemen, step this way! The chance of a lifetime! A Princess of Siam! Queen of the Emperor's Harem!" Beezer went in to see her, as he said it would help him in his geography.

Then comes a turnstile where payment is made to gain the outer promenade and theater. Against the railing of this promenade are chairs and benches and, although one might think that the advantage of the

place was an uninterrupted view of the ocean surf, all of these benches turn their backs upon the water and give their whole attention to the moving cockney throng. Fishing rods may be hired by those who have the inclination, and a line of silent folk leaned on the outer rail with a dark discouraged eye upon the unfruitful sea.

This picture of Hastings stands, I think, for most of the popular watering resorts of England and Wales. I have tried the Isle of Thanet, which is the grossest of all, Brighton, two or three places in Wales and on the eastern coast; and the British sands always reveal the crudity of those thousands who infest them in the summer months. Eastbourne is better. Cromer is not bad, although I saw it when a raw day drove the crowds indoors. Lyme Regis I like, and most of the pebbly sands of Devon and Cornwall which are too far from London to draw a week-end throng. These resorts, too, possess cliffs; and high rocks temper vulgarity.

"Well," said Bill, "that's done. Get me out of this!"

And now, having had our dinner ministered to us by the crooked waiter in the soiled shirt front, armed with the hotel key—for the door was to be locked at ten o'clock—, we set out to the pier again to witness a performance called "The Poppies" to be given by a company of London favorites.

I have read considerable of Leonard Merrick, and many of his stories deal with actors who have failed to gain success in London's west end and have fallen step by step to these shows upon a pier. These are

tales beneath whose grinning surface there lies a depth of tragedy—of ambition broken and disillusionment, of hunger and illness, of kindness, too, and charity toward those who need it. Merrick himself must have shared this life to know it with such sympathy and understanding.

I recall that Conrad once fell in with a company like this in the quest of his youth. The town was Blithepoint, which perhaps was Brighton. "Before the footlights," he wrote, "two comic men were bawling a duet; I knew they were comic because they had made their faces so repulsive. . . ." And then a lady sang

> "What is the use of loving a girl
> When you know she don't want yer to?"

And this show at Hastings, but cheaper still, was of the kind that he weaves inside his plots. There was a voice or two that had been of promise once, now coarsened by misuse; an actress whose face had been pretty in her youth and, even as she screeched and capered, there was a remnant of former daintiness that heightened the pathos of her antics; a comedian who could not quite conceal a cough beneath a ribald speech; a pianist who thumped at William Tell with a callous thumb that slid down the white keys because her fingers did not have the agility to make an honest run. The audience was moved to bursts of hilarity, but under the painted surface and the empty gesture disillusionment lay apparent, days perhaps of hunger.

We debated at the close whether we would not step around to the stage entrance and invite the company

out to supper. Did not Conrad order a *châteaubriand* and *pommes soufflées* for two ladies of the Kiss-and-Tell company when it went upon the rocks at Blithepoint? But Conrad sought his youth, and mine was over seas. We stood indecisively at the stage door, then turned away.

And now a rainstorm burst upon us and we pelted to St. Leonards—three men under one umbrella, with trickles of water inside the outside collars.

A dance was in progress at our hotel, the kind of dance one expects of purple turbans; and, as we waited for sleep to descend on us, there arose from the dining room below the sound of a saxophone—*I Want to be Happy*—and so we drifted off.

I thought I missed Gwendoline from the pasture

CHAPTER XIII

A THOUSAND COWS MEDITATE REVENGE

IT had been our intention to walk to Pevensey through Battle Abbey, but laziness cast a vote at breakfast for the direct road along the coast. Such idleness is usual to cool a hot decision. In the winter, when you meditate upon a map with wind in the chimney, you feel a vast energy at leaping hills and a journey is planned with detour and wayward course.

Miles are easy to the slippered feet that sit at home. A morning's toil is but a space across the palm, and valleys are bridged with the tracing of a finger. The brain runs free without a load and pounds with strength merely because its gears have not been shifted to the legs. On a winter night a man in smoking jacket runs at lions. Only in dreams do we tread lightly the exult-

ant hills, and our feet are sluggish when we take the road.

Our omission of Battle Abbey was immoral, and I lay it to the horrid coffee. An honest bean would have shaken us by the collar and lifted up our spirits to the longer route. It would have been no more than six or seven extra miles, and we would have seen the field of Senlac and the abbey that William built to celebrate his victory.

Our path lay along the sand to Bexhill. It is a smaller resort than Hastings but of the same general character with a row of hotels and boarding houses staring out to sea like fishwives in a storm. Two miles beyond Bexhill Beezer cried out that he was hungry, and presently we found a place to eat—a solitary house that seemed to have been washed up to the drier sand. It offered a veranda on the ocean, easy-chairs and the usual cold joint.

Bill plunged his knife into his slab of beef. "I do not understand" he said, with a gesture toward a meadow where sheep and cattle grazed, "how those cows can eat with such contentment in plain view of tables where a companion is dismembered."

"You would think" I added, "that it would cool their appetites."

"Callous creatures!" Bill went on. "If any cow poked her nose at us across the rail, she would say *I thought I missed Gwendoline from the pasture. So that is where she is.*"

Our road here turned suddenly away from the ocean and started inland as if at last its vacation had been

spent and it journeyed back to work. Once we sat for rest on the stone railing of a bridge above a sluggish drainage ditch.

"This" said Bill, taking off his shoes, "is a topmost hour. Is there any simple pleasure of life of such enjoyment as pulling the socks away from the toes? After an hour's hot walk, if you know what I mean."

"There is another," I suggested.

"And what is that?" asked Bill.

"I like to smooth out my shirt *en dedans mon pantalon*, if you grasp my French."

"True," said Bill. "One does get wopsed inside."

We lay on the turf, with a soft stirring of wind in a lonely tree—a gurgle of water lapping against the bridge.

And now for several miles, with Pevensey in sight upon a little hill, we crossed a marshy meadow where sheep and cattle stood about. As far as we could see there were no fences for our safety, and one or two steers gave us an angry gaze and wagged their heads.

"These fellows" they seemed to remark with a rotary motion of the jaw, "these fellows have fed on us too long. Let's charge and hook them! Bite for bite—a hot joint against a cold one! That fattest man I'll nip upon the leg."

However, we called them all Good Doggie, and came safe through. A certain lashing of the tail arose, I am now persuaded, from the biting of flies, but politeness was best against the chance of trouble. Nor am I so versed in farmyard ways that I can detect, whether it be—I know a cow, naturally. But what is a steer and how does it differ from a bull? I grope probably

in matters of great delicacy, not for table-talk. Bill and Beezer knew these things, for they walked fearless among these thousand animals and swished their sticks, careless of eternity.

Twelve miles from Hastings, in the middle of the afternoon, we arrived at Pevensey.

This is another of the Cinque Ports, but we can be thankful the story is already told and by this time happily forgotten. The town lies a mile or so from the ocean on a hill that is just high enough to have thrust up its head in the days when these marshes were under water. Below the circle of the town there is a river, but it is hardly larger than the frequent drainage ditches that intersect the meadows.

Pevensey, as we can read in many books, was the Anderida of the Romans and it stood on the edge of the great forest of the Weald that stretched once from Canterbury almost to Winchester. And before the Romans a British fort stood there, and before that there was probably a still earlier fort until the sequence is lost in antiquity. And these things are attested to the scholars by the coins that have been dug up—British, Roman and Saxon; with here and there perhaps a thrifty penny which a Scotchman may yesterday have banged when he untied his purse.

But the most exalted moment of the city's history was on the twenty-eighth of September, ten hundred and sixty-six, when William of Normandy sailed with ungrazing keel across these meadows and landed before the town. For here was the first touch of the Norman Conquest.

He had in his company several hundred men in black armor, and the scene is shown in one of the Bayeux tapestries worked, it is said, by his lady wife. It is recounted that William stumbled as he stepped ashore, and it would have been a dark omen for his venture if with spry invention he had not quickly grasped the sand with both his hands. "See!" he cried, "I have seized the land." And at that, of course, the aged dames who spin the threads of fate were so tickled by his wit that they changed at once their pattern in his favor. Had William bumped his nose without a timely pleasantry England would have stood successfully against him.

But Pevensey is now far ashore in the falling of the Channel with no glimpse from its silent streets of any water that is broader than a ditch. The ocean, that wooed the favor of the town and brought her treasure from abroad to deck her beauty, has left her desolate and abandoned. It kissed her once and lay beside her in the dark, then went on a journey never to return. And we may fancy still upon a moonlit night, when memory floats upon the broken clouds, that the old town climbs her ruined battlements and sighs her lonely soul southward to the sea.

A house of half-timbered front is now a museum and collects a shilling at the door. I fear it is a bit of a fraud, for its antiquities are all for sale; but the building is six hundred years old with low-raftered rooms made from ships' timbers and many perplexing corridors, and a visit is worth the price. I would rather anyway pay a shilling and be absolved from purchase.

Bill, by using unusual care, bumped his head only once, and I look upon it as a record. At our next

Sighs her lonely soul southward to the sea

amusement pier I must thrust him on a phrenologist. His head, after these weeks of low-beamed country, will offer matter for strange conjecture.

An attic is shown behind a cunning panel where smuggled rum was hidden from the King's tax. With theatrical effect the attendant crossed the room and pulled a rope. This tackle, of course, is new, and in old days one could hardly have guessed the opening. There is, also, the remnant of a mint for Sussex coin, before such manufacture became the duty of the central government. Many of the articles displayed for sale—chiefly furniture, brass, glass and china—were of considerable age and curious beauty; but even machine-made door knockers were loosely guaranteed as genuine antiques, and we distrusted much of it.

We asked for beer in the garden of the Royal Oak. It was out of hours but we plead piteously with the landlord to save our worthy lives, so he led us to a quiet spot in the shadows of the tap and set the pewter mugs upon the table—softly, like a poker game upstairs.

On the wall was a placard which I have copied.

Warning!
The Indifference of the Public
Resulted in America Going Dry.
Use Your Vote and Influence
Against Local Option.
It is the Thin Edge of the Wedge of
Prohibition!

We were so moved by this appeal that we ordered two more pints.

But the chief sight of Pevensey for a man refreshed is the ruin of its castle. It stands on the southern edge of town and the pitch beyond to a drainage ditch must

have been the ocean shore where William fell and appeased the fates by his ready wit. Many of the towns hereabouts terminate in the letters "ey" or "eye"—Pevensey, Horseye, Rickey—and this proclaims them to have been islands once in the shallow sea. The termination is Danish, but these towns existed in Roman days.

The castle's outer walls stick out to points of irregular advantage against ancient attack and they inclose a large uneven court, now overgrown with grass and shrub, that is used by the village for a playground. Within this court stand the more formidable walls of the central stronghold, with a moat roundabout, now dry—as if, indeed, the dreaded local option had already started here. Even this inclosure is of considerable size and, as we entered, a game of rather cramped cricket was in progress with loud excitement; for it was not white-trousered cricket with tea in a gay marquee upon the lawn, but a shabby little cousin of the game, bare-legged with one suspender.

Pevensey Castle is in bad repair. A hundred years of lovers have carved their entwined hearts upon the stone, with verses to attest the endurance of their passion. Time, frost, creeping vines and small boys are slowly pulling the walls apart. Give urchins but a frequent holiday and they will subdue the pyramids. In the moat we saw several stone cannon balls, too heavy for us to lift; and these were our vivid ticket to the past.

A boy and girl lay on the bank with arms entwined, and they hardly ceased from kissing as we passed. She

was a homely piece of gingham, but Cupid lost his eyesight on his English travels. There is affection in our parks, of course, but it takes its pleasure timidly, as behind a screen. In England, as in France and in the south, there is less hypocrisy.

It was now a question whether we would spend the night here at the Royal Oak or travel six miles to Eastbourne. It was Beezer who decided. We had given the cub a taste of movies and he thirsted for more blood.

"How far is Eastbourne?" asked Bill.

"Six miles."

"I'll collapse," said Bill.

And so we went by bus.

"I look upon the wheel" said Bill, "as a truly great invention. One's feet get sore with incessant tapping. An engineer could improve upon us. If a man's legs could be hooped around, with a knee for axle, he would be the better traveler. If only Burbank would cross us with a two-wheeled cart!"

Across the marshes we saw the Martello towers along the coast. From the distance they look like boxes left by a careless cheese-maker—round stone cupolas rising from the sand at intervals of a mile or so. They were built by Pitt when Napoleon threatened England with invasion, for here it was thought that he would land; but it is said that they were already obsolete against even the crude cannon of that time. And in the contest now in the London press whether the aëroplane and submarine have destroyed the value of the battleship, it has been remarked that floating ships of war are the vain Martello towers of today.

Eastbourne, as we entered, seemed of a richer and cleaner patronage than Hastings. Little plots of grass and flowers lay along the plage. Love prospered not so openly. Our hotel was under London management and was of a better sort.

At dinner we had a talkative waiter.

"Americans tip the best," he said.

"Don't expect too much," I answered. "We are very poor and stingy."

"And who give the next largest tips?" Bill asked.

"Well, sir, if I may say so, I think it's the Scotch."

"They haven't that reputation," I answered.

"He's joking," said Bill.

"No, sir. Very liberal people, the Scotch—when they travel, sir. I think it's because they have been ragged a bit."

"About banging the saxpence," I interposed.

"Yes, sir. That kind of thing. A nice tart, sir?"

"What kind?"

"Rawsbriz!"

"Three men once traveled together," said Bill, "an Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scot. When the train stopped, the Englishman got out to eat, the Irishman to drink, and the Scot—"

"Ay, sir," said the waiter. "And what did the Scotty do?"

"He went" said Bill, "through the carriages to find what had been forgotten."

"Very thrifty people, the Scotch," our waiter added.

We slipped the usual.

"Cue," he said, with rising inflection. This is a

common word in England and it has nothing to do with billiards or the stage. One hears it everywhere, usually from persons to whom one has given a shilling.

We saw a play that night upon the pier, and we were shamed by our walking dress; for there was a general display of white shirts and evening wear.

I must exclude Eastbourne from my denunciation of the British coast resorts. Here once in a while a boat is wrecked.

A blind and melancholy fiddler

CHAPTER XIV

OVER BEACHY HEAD TO ALFRISTON

YESTERDAY we had walked through meadows that were but half reclaimed from marsh and it had seemed like a kingdom insecurely held from watery conquest, but Eastbourne terminates to the southwest in the high ridge of the South Downs. These hills run eastward for a hundred miles from Chichester along the coast, but here at last they get their courage to plunge headlong to the sea. I have seen boys run along a pier to gather this same courage.

Eastbourne of late years has grown in popularity and its last houses are dotted up the slope of Beachy Head, as if the town had hurled its whitened spray against the cliff. We turned, of course, to look down upon the

general roofs, the stretch of pier, the pretty plots of grass and flowers that grow beside the sand. Halfway up a sharp-pitched meadow we sat for rest where the town had fallen out of sight below the shoulder of the hill.

The ocean lay five hundred feet below us. Sails winked in the morning sun, and steamers went about their business like stolid merchants who smoke a black cigar. A ship put off for France from New Haven down the coast with a trail of water widening at the stern. It is the wake of a ship, I am told, that betrays it first to the aëroplane, and on Beachy Head we saw how this is true. There were higher downs above us to the north, and the wind was too busy with the traffic of the clouds to visit our sheltered slope.

"Now I've done it," said Bill. "I thought a wisp of hay would be the very thing to clean my cigarette holder. But the fuzzy end has stuck."

Each of us in turn vainly bellowed out his lungs to clear the tube.

"And now" said Bill, "what's become of the spring that goes inside?"

So we lay on our stomachs and scrutinized the ground.

We moved on presently and dropped a penny in the cup of a blind and melancholy fiddler who played for trippers beside the path. He heard the rattle of the coin and nodded his acknowledgment as he sawed his pathetic tune.

At the top of the incline there is a hotel and a pavilion for refreshment.

We were now beyond the highest ridge of Beachy Head and our view swept the ocean to the west, with

much high tumbled land upon the north where church towers here and there marked a town that lay snugly in a valley; for man seeks an easy living, safe from the windy racket of an upland. There are few trees or hedges on these downs, and the lower growth of shrub and thistle crouches near the soil to be shielded from the storms of winter that play at noisy tag from top to top. On many of these rounded summits, as my map informs me, there are remains of Roman camps, and even to the eye the markings of mound and fosse are quite apparent. This is the home of South Down mutton, and patches of sheep stood munching for our eternal lunch. Far off across the world we saw a wind-mill in outline on a hill, but its lazy arms did not answer to the breeze.

This was our first acquaintance with the downs of Sussex. It is a district of which many poets have written, and always with a touch of homesickness as if they wrote in foreign lands and dreamed of coming back. Of these poets chiefly are Kipling, Swinburne and Hilaire Belloc. I shall be scanty in quotation, for an author must write his own book to earn an honest royalty. The lines of Swinburne are too softly fluent for this windy coast. He should have been of Latin race and applied his melodies to a lazy climate.

Hills and valleys where April rallies his radiant squadron
of flowers and birds,
Steep strange beaches and lustrous reaches of fluctuant
sea that the land engirds,
Fields and downs that the sunrise crowns with life
diviner than lives in words.

And this that follows is from Hilaire Belloc—homely stuff that does not twist the tongue.

When I am living in the Midlands,
That are sodden and unkind,
I light my lamp in the evening:
My work is left behind;
And the great hills of the South Country
Come back into my mind.

If I ever become a rich man,
Or if ever I grow to be old,
I will build a house with deep thatch
To shelter me from the cold,
And there shall the Sussex songs be sung
And the story of Sussex told.

I will hold my house in the high wood
Within a walk of the sea,
And the men who were boys when I was a boy
Shall sit and drink with me.

"Does it occur to you" I asked, "that this would be an excellent place for a pint of stout?"

"You read my heart," said Bill.

He sat for a long time in meditation, slowly swishing the liquid in his cup, his eye lost in the vastness of the Downs. He nodded to thoughts that swayed his brain. A dreamy mask settled on his face. What would issue from those lips? I hushed Beezer with a warning finger. Some phrase of Teufelsdröckh, perhaps, aloft upon his tower of Weissnichtwo—a line from Shelley of the Caucasus—a flash to pierce with lightning our dumber

sense. At last he spoke—in even tones—calmly, as fits an utterance of wisdom. "It's"—he paused for emphasis and swished the liquor in his cup. "It's a very, very lovely view," is what he said.

We hoisted out and followed a rocky motor road with a wide prospect of ocean and hill to the village of Birling Gap.

Here we had lunch in an old-fashioned room with a picture of a young lady in flounces, romping with a spaniel. There was, also, a clock which did not run. And I am now convinced that these idle clocks of England, knowing how faulty is their guess upon the hour, have decided it is nobler to be right once each day and night than to dawdle wrong forever around the dial. We have known persons unlike them who, prattling their ignorance without cessation, would be better if their machinery also stayed unwound.

At Birling Gap we struck uphill backward from the ocean and, mist now lying on the sea, ships floated in the sky with the horizon's chart quite lost.

Green Sussex fading into blue
With one gray glimpse of sea.

A great valley sloped upon our right, with the hotel on Beachy Head cut sharp against the sky. And in the lowland was a lonely grange with buildings huddled close. Bill is quick at horrible suggestion, and in the manner of Sherlock Holmes he laid here a plot for a murder and pointed out the barn where the body was discovered. But now a friendly sun shone on the hills, and storm and night were needed for his dark invention.

A mile or so from Birling Gap, when we had climbed high above the ocean, the road broke sharply from our upland and slithered down a hill to Eastdean; and it seemed a pretty village from above, with spire and smoking chimneys. But a man with long legs came flapping down the path and he advised us to cut a corner through an oak wood at the left and to follow a lane and fence which presently would bring us by a shorter walk to open meadows and the town of Friston.

It was a wood of massive trees, for it was sheltered by the hill and unfretted by the wind. One in the mood of Arthur Rackham might think that fairy creatures lay in the tangled roots. And to thread this path when twilight fades to darkness would be to realize that hour when it is almost fairy time on earth and little heads peep out to learn whether yet the common world is off to sleep.

All the morning a windmill had teased us on this rim of northern hills and now, popping from the wood at Friston, suddenly we came upon it. It was in bad repair and lay off from work, like a windmill which had heard about the dole; but if ever it took the whim to swing its arms at night when fancy is the sharpest, it would have seemed a giant to any rural don of slender wit. By day, however, it was a beast of excellent good nature and we lay down beside it for a rest. At our elbow was a graveyard of moldy stones, and close at hand an ancient church. In a hollow where the two roads forked was a pond, and here a cow stood knee-deep in the mud and whisked at flies.

From Friston the road followed a line of high land in a

westerly direction, with a range of distant hills in prospect across the meadows to the north. Below us in a grove of blackest shadow was Westdean, which seemed but a manor house and farm buildings grouped about. Then presently our road pitched downhill to the marshy level of the Cuckmere River.

It is a lazy stream, wandering without ambition through meadowland. The ocean is but a mile to the south but its vast excitement is unguessed.

Streams hurry on their upper courses and they leap downward from the hills, eager to reach the lower world and bear their part in brave adventure. They sing of the mighty tasks that will be theirs, of the roar of cities and the ships, of storm and tide upon the sea.

> . . . ——Never yet a rill did flow
> But longed into the world of men to go.

But when they have grown their beard and the task is nearly at their hand, they fall perversely to sleepy ways. Their ambition is lost when they feel the salty tang that borders on the sea.

At the Cuckmere River we turned south on a narrow road. And here Bill cried out "Oh, my soul!" and sat down abruptly through sheer fatigue. "You go on," he said. "I have lived many years and found life good. It is a pleasant spot. Here let me die."

The valley is flat and marshy. There are trees in the creasing of the hills, for the woods come down to drink along the stream. But the high land is mostly bare and open to the sun. This is but a few feet above the ocean and must once have been an inlet for smaller

vessels. Alfriston, up the river, where we were bound, was once a smuggling town, and this road of ours from the beach of Cuckmere Haven was the route of unlicensed midnight travel.

And hereabouts, when we had prodded Bill to action, we came upon a tavern. To our piteous appeal the

Nor was he averse to a second mug of beer at Bill's expense

bar was opened and we sat as usual in a shadow far from the window for our mugs of beer.

A traveling salesman, also, broke the law with us. His line was woolen goods and millinery. He lived at Lewes, several miles away, and he picked up orders among the small shops of the countryside, with a box of samples on his motor in place of tonneau. Nor was he averse to a second mug of beer at Bill's expense. Busi-

ness was bad, he told us, and it was his desire to get out to Canada. He had visited the exhibition at Wembley, and had fretted since. If things fell right for him he would shortly pack his bag and be off to the grainfields of the west. Meantime he idled for an hour with us. And in this he seemed like the Cuckmere River which also lay stagnant within the sound of the ambitious ocean—dreaming cheaply of the world that opened at the shoulder of the hill where white sails chased the sun to their adventure in the west.

The substance of these villages is their church

CHAPTER XV

AND THEN FOR THE NIGHT TO LEWES

ANOTHER two miles upstream brought us to Alfriston. We reached the town by footbridge and by a path that lay between brick walls and opened on the village street. English tourists passed us on the bridge and they inquired if we could direct them to a certain church hereabouts which is said to be the smallest in the British Isles. For a moment we wavered whether we would go with them in search of it, but a ghastly smile crossed Bill's face and our excursion was given up. He leaned upon his elbows to ease the weight against his feet and looked with a dark eye upon the stream.

"I'd rather fling myself over," he cried out, "and rest there in the mud. You and Beezer go."

Alfriston is famous as an ancient town of smugglers,

and the Star Inn had been marked at first to be our destination for the night. It presents a half-timbered front to the narrow street and asserts a claim to great antiquity. Its interior is said to be a museum worthy of a visit.

But we itched for faster progress and, on inquiry, we discovered that a bus was due in half an hour for Lewes. We held a caucus on the curb. Jimmy's swift eye had sought in vain a movie up and down the street, and it was his persuasion that urged us on to the larger town on the chance of Douglas Fairbanks. At a shop near by we spent a shilling for toffee, which is England's universal sweet, left our rucksacks behind the counter with a yellow cat and went off to see the graveyard and the church.

"Why the church?" asked Beezer. "We've seen so many of them."

"Listen, Rollo," I began, "your uncle will instruct you. Cease but a moment the sucking of your lollipop."

These frequent quests of ours for somber and holy things need not be esteemed to rise from any taint of melancholy disposition. These villages live in the shadow of the past, clad in the mellow garment of tower and wall; and of this ancient vestment the church is chief. There is, of course, a shallow bartering on the streets, a trickle of small errands and activity. A loaf of bread, perhaps, is fetched for supper or a boot sent out for tapping. A thirst starts a song upon a holiday. But the substance of these villages is their church.

Time is a housewife of a better sort, for she sweeps her

refuse out of doors and sets her treasure on a shelf. These walls were raised by centuries more devout than ours. The church was then the center of all life, and men thought and acted on its nod. It was the house where the artist wrought the beauty of his soul. These steps were worn by feet which laid their purpose bare before their God. At this altar was preached the crusade of daily living.

The past is a ghost that haunts a shadowed corridor. Wind strums with yellow fingers an ancient melody on these walls. And far above the muddy current of our present life these crumbling towers stand in dozing contemplation, and any jest or laughter of the street is but a bubble on the flood that drifts beyond the graveyard to eternity.

"And now, Beezer," I added, "you may resume your toffee."

The site of Alfriston Church is said by legend to be not the builder's first intention. Each day elsewhere the workmen laid the stones for a foundation, and each morning when they assembled to renew their task they found them removed to the church's present site. And so, presently, the miracle was received as an omen and the location altered.

Alfriston is a village of rare beauty. The Star Inn is a hotel of easy invitation and it leans forward on the street with a mixture of rheumatism and hospitality. A stone cross marks the center of the town, and there are delightful streets of huddled houses whose gardens must stretch downward to the river with a punt, perhaps, moored against the bank.

Wind strums with yellow fingers an ancient melody on these walls

Nor may I omit the old lady who sold us toffee and housed our rucksacks with her yellow cat. She was of quick understanding to our fatigue, eager to run for chairs; and I think that her manners were a legacy from those more gracious days which flourished before the coming of the char-à-banc. She displayed post cards on a kind of Whirling Susan, and I bought one from each partition to see her spry old fingers count them out. Bill bought a bag of toffee for a child whose hungry nose was flat upon the window, and he selected the small assortment from four bottles to get the widest range of choice.

"And a peppermint cane," said Bill. "Suck at that."

Presently we climbed aboard the bus at the town cross, and with us was a clutter of men and women and market baskets. I wish that the bus might have traveled roundabout a bit and given us a view of the Long Man of Wilmington, but the driver was on a soulless schedule. This Long Man is a huge outline in white chalk that is exposed upon the hills. No one knows who laid it bare, for all the earliest records mention it and confess their ignorance. It is the outline of a monstrous giant who strides down the slope with a staff in either hand.

We asked several passengers how to pronounce Lewes. One said Lewis, and another Loos. Wherever we have been we are always wrong. No matter how we say a town, someone sets us right and the next person corrects our corrected pronunciation. I do not know yet whether it is Pévensey or Pevénsey, Bodiam or Bojum, Steyning or Staining. I do not care, of course.

But certainly the natives ought to meet and cast a vote and then stick to their decision.

At Berwick we changed our bus. And Alciston was next and Beddingham. And then my chin fell forward on my necktie and I slept.

Sympathetically I judge a sleepy reader

CHAPTER XVI

THE PROBLEM THAT ARISES FROM THE SLEEPINESS OF READERS

SYMPATHETICALLY I judge a sleepy reader. I do not laugh at scars, for I have felt a wound. It is the chief problem of an author, nevertheless, that he find all warrantable and honest means to keep his drowsy client awake. If he nods, of what use is his fine instruction, the charm of words, the hint toward holy living? A brain all clogged with sleep is as a vessel filled that declines addition. It is the difficulty of the profession that an author can hope for perusal only at night when his readers have spent themselves on the duties of the day. A lazy slattern may take him up at noon, but to such I do not address myself. On rare holidays at best may he hope that wor-

thier readers will fetch his volume down when the wakeful sun is up and the brain unjaded.

And so I have observed that there comes an hour of evening—let us hazard nine o'clock—when unhappily the first vigor of dinner has spent itself and the brain has not led up the gay enforcement of the night against attack. In nine o'clock I strike but on an average. Housewives inclined to a dumpy life, strict men of business who run all day from colloquy to conference, tell me that theirs is eight o'clock when first the evening paper has been laid away. And this is the hour when dull books seem duller still. The laborious fellows who composed them could find then no comfort for their vanity at any glance within the room, and it is well in charity to keep the curtains down.

But whatever precisely is the hour, the time comes surely in the early evening that is as zero to a sleepy reader. Many of them, cowards at heart, yield to it. They steal softly to the lamp. They turn it out. They unbutton themselves while they are still upon the stairs. Their collar is off at the landing. The shirt is lifted from the belt in the upper hall. Boots are kicked aside. In the bedroom a general explosion scatters them all about.

And yet, if they were of sterner metal, they could endure this zero hour and by pure vigor of the will slip through the shallows, and so persist to midnight which is a more civilized time for bed. Of this power of will I am persuaded. A lady of my acquaintance has told me that her bad time is half-past eight. Even before the striking of the clock she feels its nearness and a consuming lassitude seizes her. Regularly then she

moves a chair, she brushes up the hearth; and so, the critical moment passed, she is good for another dozen chapters of even a stupid novel.

I offer a hint to publishers how they may spread their sale of books. They should apply their advertising to the advantage of an earlier dinner and a longer evening. Let them start a national campaign to pronounce a man no better than a sluggard who kicks aside his boots when the hour is young. Or, more subtly, they might combine with the dispensers of indigestible foods that tend to wakefulness, and I can fancy their interest pooled with the coffee-growers. Is it too gross that I mention the heavier brands of pie and their effect on the midnight perusal of a masterpiece?

But an author must take things as they are, before this reformation shall have been accomplished, and so conduct the method of his writing that his sharpest pages fall mid-channel in the evening when temptation bedward is at the top. Any book, no matter how stupid, can get its first chapter read; and a second, for there still is hope for a better turning. But the danger of abandonment, as in marriage, comes when half is done. Hope then is dulled by repeated disappointment, the scribbler's bad habits seem confirmed. In my own library I have examined a dozen books to see at what point my own strength gave out, as is indicated by uncut leaves. And I find that the crucial pages are at the middle. If one can pass that shallow, stubbornness will somehow get the reader through.

Ships are wrecked upon a coast, but a vessel of words founders most often in mid-ocean where plots are foggy.

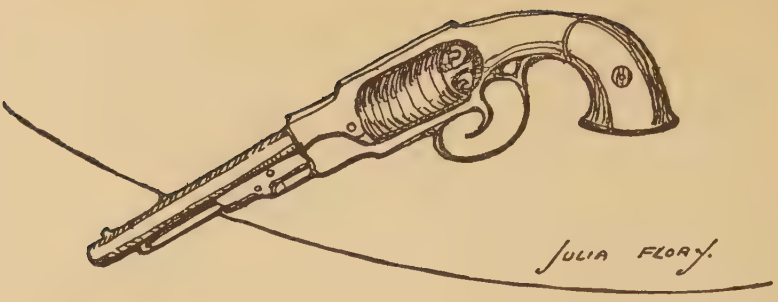
And so, now halfway in my book whose scattered leaves all marked with interlineation muss my desk, I am aware that it is only by a mighty effort that I can still further hold the reader inside his boots.

I must do something at once by way of advice to him. My dear sir, will you please take a turn around the room. Punch the fire! Sniff the cold night air at the open window! In God's name push the porch furniture about! Do the awnings need tinkering? Now's the time!

Or, if you decline this display of energy, a remedy must fall to me. Something startling I must have—arresting, shocking, explosive! This is the place, if ever, where my plot must sound a gong. Ah. . . .

I suck my pen. Those four dots stand for prolonged thought. Ah. . . . Is there nothing exciting to cast upon my pale adventures? If only, at this point, a highwayman could have assailed us! If a motor might have bumped us from the rear! I would choose Bill or Beezer rather than myself, for I am sensitive to pain. A shriek! A broken leg! Death and damnation! Can I find no lady to be rescued from the sea? No scandal to spice my page, or peep of wantonness as is the fashion of novelists?

Once again I start my chapter, and now in bolder vein. I shall force my publisher—I shall at least try to force my publisher to a four-inch headline to top the page in the manner of an evening paper when the news is raw.



Anger inflames me at the slight

CHAPTER XVII

THREE TRAVELERS ESCAPE MURDER!

A Dangerous Experience in a Country Hotel

IT is a petty tenant that holds the longest lease upon the memory. On this snowy winter morning, as I write of a departed August—for books of summer are always written in a muffler—there rises in my recollection of our leisured days of English travel how we were locked in our room at the White Hart Inn and could be released only when the chambermaid put her shoulder to the panel.

Let me, for variety, cast the occasion in a play!

The scene is the inn at Lewes, two flights up. The time is eight o'clock in the morning. The persons of the drama are two young gentlemen in pyjamas, for this is a bedroom farce with the aforementioned chambermaid for triangle. One of these gentlemen lies snoring in a fitful gust, the other reaches for his stockings.

1st Y. G. Beezer!

2nd Y. G. Kkaaww!

1st Y. G. Beezer! Get up!

2nd Y. G. (as before, in a rising gust) Kkkaaawww! (and now again, with loudest nasal fluting) Kkkkkaaaaawwwww!

And here for a moment I must suspend the drama for a protest against the English language. There is no group of letters yet devised which conveys the sound of that blast of guttural friction which we know as snoring. There is no vowel that by itself alone sets the pallet to quite the respiratory flutter which is required. I have sat at my desk for a full ten minutes practicing the windy suspiration of forced breath that one hears in a sleeping car, trying to fit it to a word. My page will balk a man who reads aloud unless he have the actor's gift to humanize this word I've coined to repair our poverty.

I was deep in this experiment, absorbed against interruption, when the housemaid entered to set my room to rights. She gave me a silly look as she patted down the pillows, for to her I am a quaint sort of person who has no occupation that can be called such. I do not rush for a hat right after breakfast. Should I take her in my confidence, I queried, put the problem to her and use her for a model? Yet God forbid that I should listen without a chaperon to a young lady snoring in my bedroom. I depend too much on Mrs. Grundy's patronage.

There is a soughing sustention of sighing suspiration, roughened to a saw-edge if catarrh and dreams are partners; but I cannot build it to a word. Cats do not talk English, yet meouw records their

plaintive bleat. Bowwow is the barking of a dog. And moo is good for any cow when thirst or passion moves her. We have contrived words for all of the domestic animals; but when a man, who is the inventor of speech, departs from consciousness and reverts to primal nature in his sleep, no letters can hold his yearning for expression. Kkkaaawww is not entirely bad. If one drains the lungs upon the combination and permits his palate, together with all other appurtenance of string and wall that infest his gullet—column, pipe and stalactite—to rattle in the blast, he has in a manner achieved the sound. And yet it is a makeshift left for my invention, unrecognized by Webster.

Anger inflames me at the slight.

The wheelbarrow has grown to be a mighty engine defying space. Man's first cave has developed to forty stories, a scooped log become a steamship; yet language falters for a word. I am not deep in science, but our oral poverty seems to show that snoring is of ancient date and that the medium of its expression precedes all formal language—the use of tools or fire, beyond a doubt,—that it came from forgotten days when man had as yet no alphabet and his untrained tongue roamed within a wilderness of uncouth sound, trying in blind explosion to tell his thought. We are told that the finger nail is the remnant of a claw, that an arm is only a leg which has gone to school. The nose, then, doubtless, was once a beak to swing a man like a parrot upon a tree; and these present disturbances of Beezer are the last vestige of paleolithic man struggling vainly for expression. I looked upon him, as he lay curled in-

nocently in sleep, as one imbedded in antiquity, who fights through a thousand years toward his perfection.

But this deep speculation has thrown me from my drama. I must cast aside the sock and buskin and proceed in plainest prose. It is a difficult chapter to start. I'll throw these paragraphs in the discard and begin again.

The lock . . . had been damaged by William the Conqueror

CHAPTER XVIII

A FINAL EFFORT TO COMPLETE THE CHAPTER

WE could not unlock the door. We turned the key upside down three times and then squinted through the hole for an explanation of the stoppage. We pulled a cord and heard a discouraged bell tinkling far down the hall. No one came. We gazed out of the window to see whether there might be a coign of vantage for our descent.

At length an aged chambermaid, who had been man and boy upon the job for forty years, came to our

assistance. With combined struggle inside and out, and much heaving of the knee and shoulder, finally we fetched the door open. The old dear uttered no surprise at our imprisonment. It was in the usual run of her employment to release gentlemen in pyjamas. The lock, she thought, had been damaged by William the Conqueror and its repair was still delayed.

"Beaucoup much!" said Beezer, who studies French. But my gratitude spoke with silent silver voice.

I must return to the night before when we entered this town of Lewes.

We had arrived at the White Hart Inn at nightfall, and here I found a letter from a friend in London, informing me that she had lately read of a murder in Lewes, perhaps in this very inn. A purse had been taken from underneath a pillow and a throat had been cut. I must be sure, she wrote, that we look beneath the beds and lock the doors. Bill's wouldn't lock. Ours locked not wisely, but too well. On Bill's door was a plate marked "Private." Our bedroom was of the public variety.

I had read this note from London in the shadow of the hallway as we entered, and pat upon the cue, like the entrance of a villain, one of a range of chamber bells started vigorously into action just above my head. To my startled thought it seemed a second warning out of darkness. Piteous the echo died away, as if even brass has its softer side.

And yet there was something altogether fascinating about the White Hart Inn. There was a musty smell, a clutter of rooms that did not march in order, a snug

tap, a commercial room with a garden at the back. Corridors roamed around in darkness as if they were looking for something they could not find. I have myself poked all round a house for a missing hat. And a flight of steps led off downward to a kitchen of darkest deviltry.

"A quaint old house," said Bill, as we mounted a broad flight of stairs hung with musty pictures, "not entirely clean perhaps, but better than Robin's Nest. It hasn't been changed since it was a posting inn."

There was a great joint for dinner, carved on a table at the top of the room by the landlady herself. A dome-like pewter cover hung above suspended on a chain, and between her assaults upon the joint this was lowered to keep her victim hot. In her private life she was of gentle manner, but she plunged a long sharp knife into the roast and turned it with a vicious twist. I thought of my note from London, but she met my eye with a calmness that proclaimed her innocent of purse and bloody throat.

After supper we wandered out to see the town. It is an ancient city on a hill, built in feudal days with a lord for master. At the top is a ruined castle with a moat and a wooded esplanade where I am persuaded we might have seen the field on which Simon de Montfort once fought with Henry III, if we had known just where to look. It was a pretty view across the roofs of the lower town into the shadowed fields beyond.

Narrow streets plunge abruptly from the hill, and a legend says that up one of these streets a King of England once ascended in a coach and four—the steepest

street ever to be climbed in this fashion by royalty. There was once a priory of St. Pancras, who is not necessarily a railroad station as Londoners suppose, and the still-existing kitchen walls are scraped by the Brighton train which is not content to steer around the hill but plunges through a tunnel beneath the town. An express came out of this black hole as we stood watching, drawing after it a cloud of smoke as if hell were down the line.

Having walked for an hour, for our diversion we went to Twinks.

Twinks is a theater, or perhaps I had better say that it is a last asylum for village talent and for broken actors rejected by more worthy stages. The entrance is by way of a candy shop on one of the steep lanes that plunge off from the high street. It is a narrow dirty hall and excels only in the density of its bad air. As we entered we heard a great roar of applause at a silly jest. The plot, if there was one, consisted of persons popping in and out of doors, and stumbling over mats. And for dialogue "Now, George, tinkle the ivories!"

It is said that Jack Palmer, who was a friend of Charles Lamb, once operated a theater here at Lewes; but the town has fallen to Twinks. First and last upon our travels we patronized a half dozen theaters—vaudeville, pictures and drama—and if we in America are ashamed of our own low average, let it be our comfort that lack of taste is as common in southern England.

Having now watched an actor with a pimpled face stumble on a rug four times to increasing merriment,

we rose abruptly, filled with septic germs, and left the hall to breathe deeply of the wholesome evening air.

Lewes had drawn its shutters for the night, and shadows lay thick upon the streets. And, if daylight

She stood at supper with dripping knife

lives with us to keep our present fashion, it is in these hours of darkness that old habits return to ghostly residence. Lewes was again a mediæval city. A guard paced upon the castle battlements. A watchman with a lantern cried the time. Crumbled towers grew per-

fect. And far below on the darkened fields Simon de Montfort walked before his tent to plan assault at dawn.

We entered the White Hart. The bar was shut. The hall was dark. The row of chamber bells hung silent at the office wicket. Then one of them moved slightly on its wire. Was it the wind from the open door? Or was this faintest tinkle a lingering echo of the past—a message caught in returning broadcast from horse-drawn days when coaches, mired on the London road, came belated into Lewes and clamored from their bed that a nightcap be fetched upstairs. Perhaps Tom Jones had quartered here, and this was his call for rum that stalked across the years to seek utterance in this shadowed hall.

But as we climbed the musty staircase to our rooms I thought again of my note from London, and in my fancy I saw our landlady as she stood at supper with dripping knife. We set our bolts, looked beneath our beds and fell asleep.

And this, dear reader, is how we escaped murder in a country inn.

Their mother had pooled her offspring at a bargain counter

CHAPTER XIX

SAFE AGAIN IN TRIVIAL MATTER

"WELL," said Bill, "this is Saturday. On Monday George comes."

For it had been arranged when we left London that on this day we were to telegraph a friend in the city to join our trip for a week or so. We looked at a map for a town where he could meet us Monday morning. It had been our intention to strike west from Lewes across the South Downs to Pyecombe and lay over there for the Sunday when trippers are the thickest and the going bad. But we could not find what trains would stop from London and so we changed our route to Brighton.

This was a concession to necessity as we knew it to be a tawdry place like Hastings, crammed with tourists on a dirty beach, and we preferred the quieter town among the hills. From Lewes to the west, also, there was a mesh of paths on windy meadows, sheep trails

up and down, beacons to be climbed, and Roman mounds and ditches. We had hoped to walk upon a ridge and count the spires of sheltered villages. Our road to Brighton crept in a lowland along the railroad track and held no invitation for the eye. Our friend George was a musician, a pianist, the organist of a city church, whose talents would already have made him famous except for his modesty and the ill fortune of the war.

It was but a morning's walk to Brighton, but the day was overcast with promise of rain and so we went by bus. These journeys of quick explosion are too rapid for impressions; for the eye is a sluggish camera even if the day is sunny, and it declines to record a picture except on a time-exposure. I recall only that there were three girls on the bus, all clad in identical shawls as if their mother had pooled her offspring at a bargain counter. All else is a smudge of running trees and poles—villages pelting up to London for the sights.

"How I love a walking trip!" said Bill, as he stretched his feet to the seat in front. And so we rattled on, until the city came in sight.

Brighton passed its innocent youth as a fishing village. It was Brighthelmstone then and was little more than a distant suburb of the older town of Lewes—a range of dingy houses on the beach where boats were stranded by the falling tide and nets were strung on poles to dry.

But it happened that a certain Richard Russell, physician of Lewes, published in seventeen hundred and fifty a book on sea water as a cure for this and

that—how it healed among other ailments a faulty lung. It was doubtless a tome of hard and learned phrase, but of such persuasion that presently many of his patients threw away his former lotion, packed their bags, called out the family horse and bounced to the ocean to renew their health. I fancy that this exodus (so far beyond his intention) must have cut his golden fees, for in seventeen fifty-four—his inland snuggery being now bare of patients— he also made the journey with all his domestic appurtenance and hung out a new shingle near the beach for reviving profit. On the sand all day his patients sat until the salty tang restored their health, and happily once more there was a gold deposit beneath the shingle.

And this was the beginning of Brighton's greatness; for in the course of time its good report spread to London, became the gossip at dinner tables and fetched back a sprinkling of pasty folk who wasted in the smoke. And among them, no doubt, were persons of high position; perhaps a Duchess even with a cough, to sit upon the beach and drink tea beneath her parasol.

Such persons must be entertained, for convalescence has its lazy hour and turns to games of chance and sport. So balls were contrived, and masquerades to ape the vanity of London. In seventeen hundred and eighty-three the Prince of Wales, just one and twenty, alive for dissipation, came also to test the waters; and this newest place of pleasure by his patronage became the vogue. A pier was built, a ballroom, a gilded hall for gambling.

All of the English cures and baths arose at the nod of

royalty. Tunbridge Wells took its start when a Queen's coach rattled in for lodging. Popularity came to Epsom when Charles II built a palace two miles away to house a mistress. The waters of Bath had spouted up with complete neglect for a thousand years, but they regained their Roman prestige when Queen Anne pronounced here an inner comfort.

And so it was with Brighton. So charmed was his fat highness by a brief prospect of the English Channel, so soothed by its salty air, that in seventeen eighty-four he sent his cook ahead from London to engage a house. And presently he designed and built a palace here for his holidays. This still stands and is known as the Pavilion—a museum now with entrance for a fee, for tides of fashion rise and fall.

We saw it from the bus as we rattled in.

"My sainted grandmother!" cried Bill. "What horrid thing is that?"

It is a Moorish structure of minaret and exotic decoration, but of a tawdry cheapness as if bricks and honest native wood were ashamed of their perversity. Nothing could be less suited to its setting. It is a touch of Bagdad at contract price, surrounded all about with common tourist lodgings. It is a scene-painter's nightmare of an eastern paradise.

Was this same Prince of Wales really an Englishman and the fat fellow who took snuff and rollicked with Beau Brummel? I seem to remember that Aladdin once fell to the dark glance of a Sultan's princess and that their course of love ran rough. He rubbed his lamp for remedy and called upon the genie to build him

a palace in the night to bear off the princess while she slept. I had thought that their flight was eastward across the Chinese mountains. Yet here is a Moorish palace quite lost and out of place. A wall is cracked as if in the giddy journey oversea—or did the genie scamp construction in his haste? One must believe that Aladdin sickened at last of the foggy English climate and led his bride home from these barren walls to seek pardon and the sun.

Be that as it may, royal tenants have departed, and the spacious rooms and corridors are come to vulgar use while trippers gape upon their tawdry splendor.

But evidence exists of a time not so long ago when this building was held in awe. A hundred years back there lived in Brighton a certain George Richardson, who was at first a silk salesman behind a counter, then a geologist, scholar and an actor. He wrote a sonnet, The Pavilion.

> O, I would roam around thy turrets, while
> They bask in moonlight beauty, while Romance
> Wakes the high visions of the holiest trance,
> And bids her fairest forms the night beguile.

This and more! But at noon the Pavilion is as bare of holy trance as any set of stage scenery that is exposed to daylight in an alley at the stage door.

And so the Prince of Wales came down to Brighton, and fashion set up its rule. There were masked balls, and games of chance, ogling, omber, dancing, drinking and intrigue. Theaters were built for London companies. The beach became a parade for flounce and

Delightful triangular affairs

ruffle. Red heels and lap dogs were the whim. Stags were loosed for sport and foxes run to earth. There were bands of music and shady groves for delightful triangular affairs—fireworks, rum and tea.

And then at last democracy saved an extra shilling, and trains ran thick from London to soil these exclusive pleasures of the rich. An iron pier was built to entertain a thousand trippers. No Prince of Wales erects now a palace here. These old houses of satin hospitality have run up cheap partitions, clipped the upper hallway for an extra room and hung a placard in their parlor window.

We sent our telegram to George and selected the Madeira Hotel on the ocean front. It is what the English call a private hotel, if anyone knows exactly what I mean.

I suppose that a private hotel is much like a public boarding house, if again you follow me—a boarding house for transients with a certain weight of steadies who take the choicer window tables and lift their melancholy puppy to a chair. It is a small hotel, without porter, lift, office wicket or other expensive frippery. Its landlady passes each day a cold hour upon her ledger, but otherwise she mingles with her guests, and always remarks that it is a fine day and how sultry it is in London.

A Chinese gong is sounded in the hall and the boarders gather in promptly for meals, with only dark meat for those who come late. "Sorry, sir, the *rawsbri* tarts are gone. Jelly and cream is left. Very good, sir. And the same for the young man? Yes, sir."

If it is breakfast the boarders tell one another of a sleepless night and how they tossed and heard the bells. Time was, I suppose, when church bells were of comfort; but now they are only mileposts in a wakeful traffic and a boast at breakfast.

Incoming letters are left on a table at the door and any recurrence of a postmark leads to suspicious comment. "Here's another for you, Betty. I'm afraid that young man of yours hasn't much to do. You'll be popping off, I suppose, most any time." This is said by an old gentleman, with a wink at the beauty of the boarding house. And the B. of the B. H. thrusts the letter among her laces and goes apart for a private reading.

The inmates of these hotels are mostly ladies of ripe age and bursting plenitude, as if a substantial jelly took its exercise; and here they are parked for the season with their knitting. Their pattern never advances to an end. Like Penelope do they spend their time in this dull innocence until their lord's return? And do they ravel out their work at night to hold a lover off? Dear heart, woo me coldly yet awhile! I must finish this tidy first. And they stand on the shore of the barren sea for a sail that never comes.

Bill, as usual, found a Pomfret-Dawken at Brighton. She is everywhere. She and Dycon sat together at dinner and dropped pieces of meat for a waddling spaniel with moist pathetic eyes. They were the first to take the easy-chairs before a fireplace where the coal was seldom lighted.

I noted the contents of this small room where the

boarders gathered after meals. It contained three couches, four large upholstered chairs for steady guests, twenty ordinary chairs for transients, a piano strewed with popular music all tumbled up with missing leaves and a manual for beginners on the guitar, two hassocks, a whatnot cabinet of ocean souvenirs locked but for sale, two tables, eleven pictures, last season's abandoned novels, two Egyptian tapestries (Cleopatra in her barge, Moses at the rock), three clocks that did not run, a barometer for tapping, five vases, four candlesticks, nine sofa pillows, a set of dusty tongs, a hod with a painting of Lake Como, four charity boxes for local causes, the dinner gong and three aspidistra plants.

They say that English sailors, back from the south seas, sick for a glimpse of home, burst into tears at the sight of one of these plants as they come off the pier; for they consider it a buoy to mark the journey's end.

Brighton is the usual sort of British watering place. It is of even larger clutter than Hastings. There are more legs upon the beach and love prospers faster to its end. Nowhere in the world is one more conscious that man is a biped. Its hotels stretch to a longer monotony along the ocean front. Wherever a window can crane its neck and behold the water even though it catch neuritis, that is an ocean view. Its piers are stocked with an extra hundred slot machines for fortune telling and copper gambling. Its moving pictures and vaudeville are more crowded, with a queue for a block along the sidewalk to wait for seats.

It scores again on Hastings in the possession of an aquarium with strange fish that wiggle their noses on

the glass—a damp under-water sort of place where even a mermaid would take cold. Here the corpse of a giant turtle is displayed.

TURTLE!

from the
Island of Ascension
Presented to the Company
By Her Most Gracious Majesty
THE QUEEN

August 8, 1875
Weight Four Cwt.

Leaving great doubt whether this excessive weight is that of Victoria in her plumper days or of the turtle.

We turned up our collars and attended a concert in the aquarium. An infant prodigy played the violin, but it was such a painful business that we pronounced our sixpence wasted and hurried out for warmer air. "I ask you," said Bill, "can you stand that? She should be drowned in the aquarium."

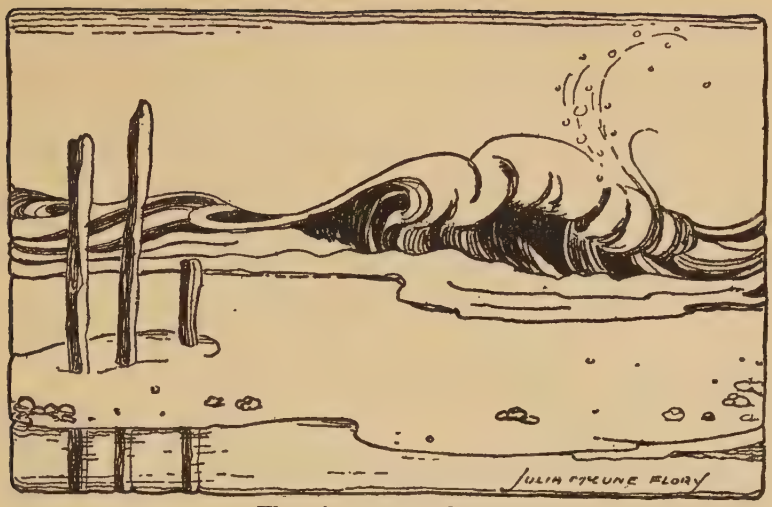
On the pier a dingy crowd moved up and down, seeking an entertainment that it could not find.

We slept in the afternoon. It was when this was done that I obtained permission from Bill to list the contents of his traveling drug store. All of the mendicants that follow were inclosed in a leather box so by so (here a gesture is needed to explain). Atomizer, shoe laces, collar buttons, Listerine, alcohol, safety razor, ash tray, Euxesis, milk of magnesia, dental

paste, Mennen's Kora Konia, skin balm, vanishing cream, lemon cream, *Houbigant pour le teint*, Turpo, camphor ice, face powder, eye-dropper, Guy Kala, orange stick, nail file, shoehorn, scissors, Peptomangan, dental floss, corkscrew, bottle opener, court-plaster, coil of wire for atomizer, toothbrush, gout pills, comb, powder puff, wad of cotton, rubber bands, corks, bottle of spirits (for hardening feet), safety pins, soap box, *Savon au suc de laitue* (juice of lettuce), sponge bag, smoked glasses, extra glasses, quill toothpicks, cocoa butter, alcohol swabber, two sponges.

"And you have used all these things?" I asked.

"Every one!" said Bill. Then he hesitated. "No," he said, at length. "Not as yet the *Houbigant pour le teint*. Not that, as yet."



Water is an untamed creature

CHAPTER XX

A SHORT CHAPTER ON BOREDOM

THE weather turned rough on Saturday night and all Sunday a squall blew off the sea. Every chair at the Madeira had its dowager, its book or knitting; and as often as anyone ventured to the door a gust slammed it to the wall to a general discomfort. There is a certain inclination of the head to peer above the glasses which puckers the brow and otherwise marks the face with disapproval.

The ornamental birch logs were lifted from the hearth and a small fire lighted. It did its bit in a tuppenny sort of way to lift the chill. The landlady assured us that such weather at Brighton was almost unknown. She remembered a day like it four years ago, but none since. There will be a blizzard when I

arrive at Paradise. Watering places do their worst for me. A young lady tried her hand at music, but each tune ended in the middle where the sheet was gone. Toward night the hotel sank to solitaire.

Great waves pounded on the sand and broke and whirled in flying spray. At fitful intervals the wind tore apart the clouds for a dazzling flash of sunlight, but it was a treacherous promise and those who ventured out came pelting back with drooping feathers.

But this is Brighton's best. The ocean was no longer the patient beast of commerce, the familiar comrade of idle sport, a housewife who sweeps the beach on the bidding of the moon. It had slept in a vacant dream with children teasing at its rest. It had been the mirror of the clouds. But now in altered mood it stretched gray and sullen to the rim of sky. It flashed with white anger to the shore to assert its primal nature and drown the petty creatures who had plagued its sleep.

I took a bath after lunch, but it was not for cleanliness. Any occupation was good that passed the time.

I was sitting in meditation and the tub, marveling how the little pool about me had been tamed from the riot of the outside storm, when a knock sounded on the door. I sat quiet with that feeling of modesty one has that he must not speak to strangers even through a door when he is ringed about with soap. Persons of fine sensitiveness tell me that they seize a bath robe if a telephone bell catches them undressed.

"Hello!" said the voice.

"Bill!" I cried. "Is that you?"

"Hurry up," he answered. "The sun is out. Let's go for a bus ride."

And so we did, choosing one at random from a half mile of them that barked for customers along the beach.

We sat on top through rain-soaked glistening country to the town of Pyecombe, where we alighted and took the first bus back.

On our return, although the sky was broken into patches of deep blue, the ocean still pounded in.

"Land" I said, "can be captured to the use of men. Forests are cut away and mountains leveled. Prosperity spreads its cities in wide circuit and sweeps over marsh and plain. But water is an untamed creature. We dip our fingers in it as it lies asleep and we hurl it into spray and say we are its master; but when the wind is up, in derision the ocean laughs."

"Very pretty," said Bill. "When did you think that up?"

"In the tub," I answered.

"Tubs" he replied, "are the home of philosophers. Diogenes, for example, with hot and cold laid on, did his best thinking in a tub.

"Land is fixed" I continued, "but it always changes. Water, on the contrary, changes but is always fixed. Civilization cannot alter it. On shore we marvel if we see a vista unaltered even through a hundred years. But the ocean is to the eye the same as when it was swept by the ships of Greece and men sang at their oars across the purple twilight."

"For myself," said Bill, "I sing when I take a bath.

Tiled rooms are best. I turn on the water and let loose."

"I used to sing," I replied, "when I was young, in the vestibule, with the outer and inner doors closed. And I always sing on the platforms of sleeping cars. A great roar puts me at my best."

It rained again toward night. At the Madeira a dozen Penelopes knitted with vacant thought. An old gentleman tapped the barometer in doubtful hope. The B. of the B. H. sang *On the Back Porch.* Bill secured a padded chair and soon his chin was sunk within his collar.

He kept by himself—on the lonely hills

CHAPTER XXI

IN WHICH THE DEVIL IS INTRODUCED

A WIRE from George on Monday morning told us that he could not leave London for a week, so after breakfast we called a business meeting. The Devil's Dyke is six miles from Brighton at the top of the Downs. It is said to be thick with char-à-bancs and cold lunch but, as it promised a wide prospect to the ocean and pleasant villages on the road beyond, we had hoped to include it on our journey. The morning was still raw, however, with sudden gusts of rain, so we gave up the Dyke for safer travel in a bus along the coast by way of Hove to Steyning.

The legend of the Dyke, nevertheless, is worth the telling for its pretty moral.

Once upon a time in days when magic flourished the Devil grew jealous of the village churches that dotted all the Weald. From Canterbury to Winchester of a Sunday morning there was not a valley which did not sound with praise of God. Even on the beacon-tops the wind, which had been a merry rascal through the week, lay off its pranks and tried its voice at holy tunes and hallelujahs sour to the Prince of Darkness.

Naturally the Devil was not feasted in these pious towns; at least in daylight, for when night is down he need not muffle up his face for entrance anywhere. Always has this been so, for the night is his own creation and the dark hours his kingdom strong against assault—as every one knows who is not a hypocrite. Therefore, on his visits to the district, he kept by himself as distant as might be on the lonely hills till the spread of twilight. But ever as the shadows thickened his eye was open for any cranny where he might lodge temptation.

He was so engaged on a certain evening of long ago, deep in dirty meditation as he beheld the frequent spires and heard their bells of vesper service. And as he strode in lordly isolation from beacon up to beacon and beheld this wide security that dwelt in the folding of the hills he swished his angry tail. The night had nearly closed around when by chance he met St. Dunstan who also took the evening air.

"*Deum de Deo!*" cried the Devil, for he has always practiced Latin, "Here comes the hated cause of all this virtue. I must have words with the saintly fellow to trip him to my purpose. Master Dunstan! Yo ho!" And he stopped the holy man for converse.

Now the Devil, as all good men will acknowledge, has persuasive ways, and of a consequence Dunstan threw down his staff and the two men sat together.

"Dunstan," said the Devil, "is there any little favor that I can do for you? Have you need of wealth to build a house?"

Dunstan turned a shrewd eye on him, but shook his head.

"Is there a church unfinished? I would subscribe toward a chapel. It's common. I am of course not entirely with you in theology, my dear saint, but we practical men of the world offer compensation for our looser life. I myself paid out money once for the completion of St. Peter's, as that good man Martin Luther knows. Its trustees acted agreeably on my hint to sell indulgences among the rich."

"Our lists are full," Dunstan answered.

"I am grieved," the Devil said. "Your coldness hurts me. There is that excellent Society of Jesus. Has it need of funds in Spain? It is a usual charity of mine. I admire its purpose and its vigor. I would subscribe for kindling, which must now be scarce."

But Dunstan was unmoved.

"To Faustus once" the Devil persisted, "I gave Helen of Troy with her kiss for an hour of night. She is now, of course, a bit old; but is there some other lady who takes your fancy? Cleopatra still holds her looks."

"God forbid!" said Dunstan, "that I should be burdened with a wife."

"Of wives, I spoke not," replied the Devil. And a

silence fell between them, broken by a distant bell of holy service.

"See!" said the Devil, spreading out his hoofs for comfort and waving with a large gesture to the world below. "If you will assist me in a little plan these broad kingdoms of the Weald are yours."

He had tried this trick vainly a thousand years before on the top of an eastern mountain, but now he added fresh argument in the title of wealthy cities, of rivers with their crowded commerce, and all else of grain, of castle, manor house and grazing sheep. The Devil smiled with that gracious generosity that always marks a person who gives away what is not his to give.

But Dunstan of course refused and went so far as to twit the Devil on the staleness of his offers.

At this the Devil rose and uncurled his tail which twitched in a mighty wrath. Up and down he strode until the hilltop trembled. The grass withered in the hotness of his anger. And now by chance he faced the sea which lay far below in the peaceful twilight of the south.

He paused. The sight of the broad water stirred in him a recollection. For the Devil, who has always been a scholar (perusing holy books for his evil purpose), remembered Noah's flood—how the waters lifted up and drowned the sinners of the earth. And if sinners, he mused, why not. . . . Ah! Do good men swim with a stronger stroke?

And he laid a wager with St. Dunstan—who must have been in a mild way a betting man—that he would dig a trench before the dawn and let the ocean through

the Downs to drown the churches of the Weald and all the pious men who sat at vespers.

"Done!" cried Dunstan. "And the forfeit?"

"If I lose," the Devil answered, and at this his smoking lip curled in an evil scorn, "if I cannot bring the ocean to my command, you may seize me by the nose with red-hot pincers and twist them as you will."

"It will be an office to my liking," said Dunstan. And he took his staff and departed down the slope, leaving the Devil to his plot.

No sooner had he gone than the Devil whistled to his grimy underlings, who forsook their large or trivial mischief of the dark and hastened to his call. For a minute the sky was black with wings, then all squatted at his feet.

"Imps!" the Devil cried, "hereabouts there's work that's worth a sweat." And to them he bared his purpose.

That night elsewhere, even in Paris which sits closest to perdition, there was no badness done; for the Devil's muster was complete in Sussex. The gambling wheel was laid aside, the noisy riot on Montmartre. No robber walked the streets, or painted woman, so hallow'd and so gracious was the time.

But on the Downs the sound of shovels, the squeak of rusty barrows, resounded across the darkened hours. And the Devil sat aloft upon a hill and marked his task against the progress of the stars.

Midnight! and one! and two! and three o'clock! Already a great trench was scooped almost to the level of the sea. The ocean roared in anticipation of its

triumph, for since the world began it has been a pagan in its heart ready for the Devil's nod. The tide lapped upward on the sand, alert for the rush of water to drown the Weald.

And now, although the stars were not yet faded and darkness still sat secure, the Devil walked among his imps and cursed them to greater speed with oaths of his own contrivance. On his face was a look of sour enjoyment, for the dawn was distant by an hour and the Downs were nearly dug away. Ten thousand imps prattling in many languages, but mostly French, strained and heaved till the sweat ran from them in dirty puddles; and still the Devil lashed them with his tail.

Now it happened that a widow lived in a lonely cottage on an exposed shoulder of the Downs. She had washed her dishes, put milk in a saucer for her cat and gone to bed at dusk.

But, as is the custom of older folk, she awoke before the dawn. A strange sound assailed her ears. Could it be the wind beating from the ocean? Yet the branch against her window barely stirred. Could thieves be breaking in her house? She folded back her nightcap from an ear and lay a bit to listen. The sound was far off down the slope, which was usually silent through the night.

She climbed from bed. She struck a match and lighted up the candle. She thrust her feet inside her slippers and wrapped a shawl around her. And now, fearfully, she advanced to the cottage door. She dropped the chain. She swung it open and looked out

Holding her candle—as timid housewives do who look for thieves

upon the night, holding her candle high above her head as timid housewives do who look for thieves.

It was this that thwarted the Devil's purpose. No sooner did the light appear upon the rim of eastern hill than the Devil thought it was the sun.

"A thousand pests!" he cried. "The stars have marked the night a-wrong." And then, thinking of his wager and the forfeit, "My sainted nose!" he bawled. Fear flashed upon his dusky cheek. He turned and ran, leaping from the beacon in a loathsome fright to get back safe to hell.

The imps, too, as you might expect, seeing their master in such a horrid haste, fell themselves to panic. Shovels were thrown aside. Barrows were cast away. There was a scurrying of a thousand feet, and in a moment the hill was bare. Nor could they, for all their speed, get to Paris for any profit before the dawn.

As for the widow, she went back to bed; and to this very day she tells her neighbors how thus and thus she beat off thieves who assailed her henyard.

It is recorded in the sequel that Dunstan was up betimes, for like all good men he was an early worm. In fear he opened up his shutter and looked upon the Weald. It lay dry and safe in the morning sun and, with that quickness which saints possess, he knew that the ocean had not done the Devil's work. So into the fire he thrust his iron pincers till they were in a red-hot state, then pelted fast upon the Devil.

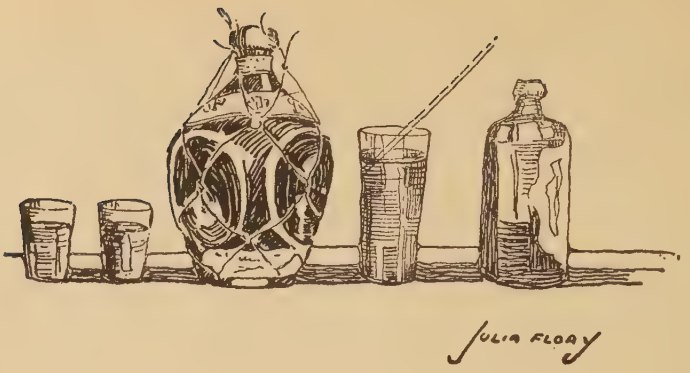
Lunging on him he clapped the pincers to his nose and twisted the handle till the Devil's nose was all in flames. And so he dragged him for fifty miles, up hill

and down through brier and thorn, bumping his softer parts on all sharp and jagged rocks till the Devil was in much discomfort.

"Led me doe!" cried the Devil nasally.

At last, when Dunstan's wrist was numb, the Devil shook him off. He ran until he came to Tunbridge Wells, where he thrust his flaming nose deep below the water to ease the pain. And this is why these waters taste of sulphur even to our present time and are strong in healing.

The Devil's Dyke remains as when the shovels were thrown aside—a deep channel scooped almost to the level of the sea—and all the churches of the Weald still ring their bells upon a Sabbath morning to gather in the grateful folk whose grandsires escaped this second flood.



"Would you save a human life?" asked Bill

CHAPTER XXII

IN WHICH A LADY TAPSTER SAVES OUR LIVES

THE bus route lay along the coast through Hove to Shoreham-by-the-Sea, where it turned inland up the Adur. At Upper Beeding we crossed the stream and circled under the broken walls of Bramber Castle. The sea once flowed in this narrow valley with hills both east and west; and if the Devil had laid out three and six to buy an ordnance map he would have pitched upon this natural gap and drowned the Weald by midnight. Bramber Castle is now five miles from the ocean, but it must once have stood above the inlet's shallow beach. It was built first in Saxon days, but is mended in later fashions.

"Why did they never repair castles to match?" asked Beezer.

"Ah," said Bill. "Suppose that you wore your pants for a hundred years and at last the cloth wore through.

Do you think that you would find then the same cloth for patch?"

"Is that the explanation?"

"By no means," said Bill. "See! There's a path up the hill, worn bare by picnics."

"I think" persisted Beezer, "that if Sir Walter Raleigh were alive today and his old duds were wearing out, he would look odd in an ancient cloak and modern trousers."

"Now you've hit it," said Bill.

"Suppose we climb the path," I queried, "and explore the castle."

"What! In this rain?" answered Bill.

So we viewed it through the splattered windows of the bus, and checked it off in comfort.

In the misrule that preceded the Reform Bill Bramber was a pocket borough. A candidate writes of his election in sixteen seventy-nine. "You would have laughed to see how pleased I seemed to be in the kissing of old women; and drinking wine with handfuls of sugar; and great glasses of burnt brandy; three things much against the stomach." There were only thirty-four votes cast, but each elector may have fetched the whole circle of his thirsty uncles and any aunt who was cut off by wrinkles from a willing kiss. It is said that a tenant with rent at three shillings a week, refused a thousand pounds for his vote.

And Wilberforce once sat for Bramber but did not know the whereabouts of his constituency, which was usual enough in those jolly days. A journey took him to the south from London and by chance his carriage

passed through the town. It was a pretty village and he alighted to ask its name. "Bramber!" he exclaimed, "Why that's the place I'm member for." I hope he summoned his forgotten electors and invited them all to beer.

Mr. E. V. Lucas is the author of a pleasant book on Sussex and he was our guide across this country of the Downs. There is much learning on his page but it is so spiced with humor, so turned to easy phrase, that he is the prince of cicerones. His book is crammed with the rummage of antiquity and now and then I shall steal a fact or two and hope by confession to escape the noose. He is in discourse now of Beeding which lies across the stream from Bramber.

"It was not long ago" he writes, "that a masterpiece was discovered at Beeding, in one of those unlikely places in which with ironical humor fine pictures so often hide themselves. It hung in a little general shop kept by an elderly widow. After passing unnoticed or undetected for many years, it was silently identified by a dealer who happened to be buying some biscuits. He made a casual remark about it, learned that any value that might be set upon it was sentimental rather than monetary, and returned home. He laid the matter before one or two friends, with the result that they visited Beeding in a party a day or so later in order to bear away the prize. Outside the shop they held a council of war. One was for bidding at the outset a small but sufficient sum for the picture, another for affecting to want something else and leading around to the picture, and so forth; but in the discussion of tactics

they raised their voices too high, so that a visitor of the widow, sitting in the room over the shop, heard something of the matter. Suspecting danger, but wholly unconscious of its nature, she hurried downstairs and warned her friend of a predatory gang outside who were not to be supplied on any account with anything they asked for. The widow obeyed blindly. They asked for tea—she refused to sell it; they asked for biscuits—she set her hand firmly on the lid; they mentioned the picture—she was a rock. Baffled, they withdrew; and the widow, now on the right scent, took the next train to Brighton to lay the whole matter before her landlord. He took it up, consulted an expert, and the picture was found to be a portrait of Mrs. Jordan, the work either of Romney or Lawrence."

Here Lucas drops his plot unfinished without that happy ending which the drama needs. I choose to think that the aged widow sold her precious canvas for a thousand pounds. Let's be generous to a wrinkled lady! Ten thousand pounds and not a farthing less! She paid off her mortgage and sat thereafter at her upper window without a business care (lollipops neglected, the lid locked tight upon her biscuits) forever knitting lace tidies in the sun.

At Steyning we had lunch at the White Horse Inn. It is a musty building of little village whiffs and odors that were gathered here for shelter from the rain. We ate in the coffeeroom, a dingy apartment well named, being of a muddy color. There were hunting scenes upon the walls, each with a whisky advertisement

across the bottom of the frame. There was, also, a plaque of rosy celluloid which held two clothes brushes, for decoration only—and this device praised gin in gilded letters.

The downpour had ceased while we sat at our heavy slabs of beef, and in a deceptive flash of sunshine we

The roads were rough and the going hard

visited the village church. And here we discovered the cause of this inclement weather.

It seems that St. Cuthman built a house of worship on this site—a building now swept away. He was an early Christian and he tended sheep upon the Downs. In course of time his father died and as he was of restless dis-

position he contrived a barrow, set his aged mother in it and set out upon his travels. Such wallet as they had was boosted beneath her skirts to lift her to an easier bounce.

I fancy, however, that the roads were rough and the going hard, for it chanced that the barrow broke upon a jounce close upon a field where men were pitching hay. Cuthman mopped his sweat and cried for help. But the men, instead of running with a thong to mend his frail conveyance, laughed heartily as at a jest. St. Cuthman, at this neglect, was observed to stand for a moment with mumbling lips, and straightway a heavy storm broke on the field, destroying all the crop.

"It seems to me" said Beezer, "that things in those days were pretty soft for saints."

"Quite so, Rollo," I replied. "And now as well, if they have the ear of Mrs. Eddy. I knew a lady who stopped the law of gravity by the quickness of her prayer. It was a safe, suspended by a rope above the sidewalk. And the rope snapped, but God was love."

"And what then?" asked Beezer.

"Nothing! The lady dodged."

I digress. To this very day, so strong was Cuthman's prayer, ever against the season when hay is pitched a similar tempest breaks forth to teach men that they must help a traveler in distress.

"I suppose she *thought* it stopped," persisted Beezer.

"What stopped?" I asked.

"The safe."

"I have her word for it," I answered, "and she is an honest woman."

Forearmed by knowledge of the legend, Bill bought a rubber coat at Steyning and was pronounced perfect across the shoulders, as from a shop in Piccadilly. We went to the railway station where our bags, despatched from Rye, were awaiting us. We fumbled out clean linen, then checked them to Guildford. Rain still holding off, we took to the road.

"Suppose" persisted Beezer, "that some one was walking behind her, just far enough back to be hit by the safe when it did come down—after she had finished her prayer, of course, and had stepped out from under."

"Such selfishness, Rollo, is unthinkable. She would have been guilty of animal magnetism."

"What is that?" asked Beezer.

"Something quite horrid that Catholics, Methodists and Unitarians have. Come, put your thoughts on Merry England. See that beacon, how tall it is!"

We had hoped this afternoon to walk to Arundel, twelve miles if direct across the hills, but the road winds roundabout upon the north. And for an hour upon our left, high upon the Downs, we saw the grove of beaches that crowns the Chanctonbury Ring. These trees were planted in seventeen-sixty by a certain Charles Goring and sixty-eight years later, when he was getting on, he wrote a poem of the matter.

How oft among thy broken turf
With what delight I trod,
With what delight I placed those twigs
Beneath thy maiden sod.

And then an almost hopeless wish
Would creep within my breast,
Oh! could I live to see thy top
In all its beauty dress'd.
That time's arrived; I've had my wish,
And lived to eighty-five;
I'll thank my God who gave such grace
As long as e'er I live.
Still when the morning Sun in Spring,
Whilst I enjoy my sight,
Shall gild thy new-clothed Beech and sides,
I'll view thee with delight.

Chanctonbury is not the county's highest point, but no beacon on all the Downs so draws the eye and its crown marks fittingly the ruler of the range. We are to see these trees in changing direction on many succeeding days; and lastly on Blackdown Hill a week ahead they will mark the horizon to the south. There are, of course, in more ambitious countries many mountain tops of loftier and more defiant majesty; but these beacons of the Sussex coast stand so close to village life that they have entered the texture of our English thought, and like the half-timbered houses and roofs of thatch, they are an item of our heritage sent across the sea.

We had marked the Ring for nearer exploration, but the sky was thick with racing clouds and the hilltop offered but scant shelter in a storm.

And ever when the day was done,
And all the sky was still,

How I should miss the climbing moon
O'er Chanctonbury's hill!

But the sky was not still and there was no climbing moon. Instead there was a sudden downpour, and we pelted on for a half hour under such slim protection as a high wall gave until we came to the town of Washington. It has no relation to George or the hatchet.

We dripped into the tap; but we were ourselves the only spigot that was running, for it was the hour when the bar was closed. "Would you save a human life?" asked Bill, in that persuasive manner which breaks down the stoutest law. And, of course, the landlady at the wicket softened to his smile. She hung our coats at the kitchen fire and led us to an inner sanctuary where we would be safe from the roving eye of any constable—the very room, perhaps, where once Hilaire Belloc had sat at beer and had scratched down graceful verses. "They sell good beer," he wrote,

They sell good beer at Haslemere
And under Guildford Hill;
At little Cowfold, as I've been told,
A beggar may drink his fill.
There is a good brew in Amberley too,
And by the bridge also;
But the swipes they take in at the Washington Inn
Is the very best beer I know.

But ours was whisky, for we shivered with the cold. "Where is this Cowfold?" asked Bill. "And Amber-

ley, also? Are they on our travels? They sound like towns that I should see."

"Amberley, yes, in a day or two."

"Ah," said Bill, "I shall look forward to it."

I think that the mistress of the Washington Inn was acquainted with the tale of St. Cuthman and his downpour and that she hoped to atone for the surly manners of the past, for presently she returned our coats, steaming from the fire and almost dry. Her prayers for better weather may eventually prevail, but the rain continued all the afternoon.

We went by bus to Worthing. I recall a young woman who traveled with a baby sucking at a rattle; and with her was a suitcase, handbag, umbrella, comforter for B. S. A. A. R., a basket, child's hat and a pail of spades. When she alighted the conductor, Bill and another passenger gathered her possessions and set them on the curb. And now I know that the rain will stop.

At Worthing we changed busses in a dripping street along the ocean, and in less than half an hour we came to Arundel, inland on a hill.

Downward she cast her eyes, as ladies always do in these hotter stages of flirtation

CHAPTER XXIII

FOR SENTIMENTAL READERS

THE hotel at Arundel is the Norfolk Arms, the property of England's premier duke; which means only that certain pretty privileges and decoration bare of use have descended on him. But there were races next day at Goodwood, eight miles to the west, and the rooms were filled. It was arranged, however, that we might eat at the inn and be lodged across the street.

This is often to a foreigner's advantage. It seems a

present hardship, but sometimes he gains a glimpse of homely living that repays his inconvenience. For he departs from electric lamps and jumps to candles. There is a fleeting vista of a kitchen hot with supper, and the laying of the cloth. He penetrates, however slightly, into the domestic customs of a country and sees how families live at home. If he were a friend and guest, an obligation would be upon him to merge himself into the habits of his host, but with payment he comes and goes with a side glance into daily living which is enough.

On this occasion the village jeweler had extra rooms which he let on racing week. At first it seemed, for lack of space, that he would have to divide us like Solomon's baby with a widow up the street; but presently his wife discovered another bed stored in an attic which could be brought down and dusted. Ours was a bare guest room at the top of the house, with a large closet and window for Bill. On our mantel was a range of discarded novels by Mrs. Southworth, the Duchess and Bertha Clay. Bulwer Lytton stood at the end, and he leaned amorously for support against the shoulder of a china shepherdess. Downward she cast her eyes, as ladies always do in these hotter stages of flirtation.

Was not Mrs. Southworth a favorite of the old Queen? Is not she the lady author of popular esteem whom Strachey mentions? The sly fellow suggests that the Queen's taste in books was low. Bill is quick at any hint like this. Perhaps, he argued, these books were a riffraff from Arundel Castle where Victoria was frequently a guest. On these very pages, may be, her

thumb had left its imperial mark at midnight in some lordly tower upon the hill. Bill warmed upon the theme and made a tale of it. He picked a blot to be a tear dropped in grief when the unhappy lovers were forced apart. And then we washed and went to dinner.

At a long table of the dining room there was a group of men and women gathered for the three days' racing at Goodwood. They were smartly dressed and of an easy negligence together which showed them to be accustomed comrades. A newspaper was divided and scanned for tips upon the ponies. Shilling bets were laid. Little jests went around the board which concerned their set alone. "Do you remember the time when Archie forgot his rubbers?" That kind of thing, with laughter that outweighed the essential humor of the story! Every close association has these reiterated anecdotes, and they improve like ripening wine. But one must be of the elect to share the jest. If an outsider sits within the circle, his response must lag for explanation and he will be judged quite slow and bare of wit. And nations, also, are but companies grown big that utter jests of local circumstance. It is our American tradition, therefore, that the English have a sluggish humor. And they, in turn, think that ours is horseplay without a point.

These folk at Arundel were of an attractive sort in becoming evening dress. After our dingy day among the purple turbans and lopsided skirts of Brighton it was a pleasure to see women in comely costume and to hear snatches of jolly conversation around the table.

After dinner we walked upon the town. It is chiefly

a single street that climbs from the Adur and follows beneath the castle wall to the Roman church of St. Philip Neri at the top. For through long tradition the Dukes of Norfolk have been catholic. I seem to remember from Froude that the family gave a deal of trouble in Elizabethan days and that Norfolk House upon the Strand was the resort of Jesuit priests who came secretly from the colleges of France and Spain. As times grew thick in the threat of the Armada many of these Jesuit heads dangled horribly from the towers of London Bridge, and Norfolk House was watched by the spies of Walsingham. The Duke of Norfolk of those days hoped to marry the Queen of Scots and seize the English crown. He was thrown into the Tower and finally was executed for treason.

Here at Arundel, convenient to the coast, many of his schemes were hatched. His cipher letters to the King of Spain carried word, no doubt, how England was divided into factions and was ripe for conquest, how my lord thus and thus had spoken privately in his favor and what aid he offered. In those days ships from Spain must have cast their secret anchors on the Sussex coast when the moon was dark. Their skiffs must once have floated up the Adur with muffled oar to discharge their dangerous messenger at a postern gate. How went matters at Corunna? Were sufficient ships gathered with ball and powder, and when might the fleet appear?

I put these hints to Bill and Beezer, and they marked the very spot upon the margin of the meadows along the Adur where the boat was grounded.

"If but a cloud would douse the moon!" cried Bill.

"There's ugly work tonight, my mates," was Beezer's echo.

They never fail me. I have but to lift the curtain of a scene and they start at once the action of fantastic drama. History is their servant rather than their master. And what if a fact be wrong, when excitement must be raised? They do but follow the usual method of a novelist.

Like Lewes, but in a more beautiful and apparent fashion, Arundel is a feudal town. It still lives as a tenant of the castle whose heavy towers stand above it on the hill. Its patronage is from the Ducal kitchen, its gossip from the hall. The very street crawls up the slope as if humbly hat in hand it sought the favor of an audience. For the castle is not a ruin, but is alive with a present family and a troop of servants.

We tried to find a boat to row upon the river, for the rising tide was running fast; but the owner had gone to supper and now sat in slippers careless of his neglected business. So we walked along a road that followed on the bank and soon came to the lodge at the gate of Arundel Park. We looked timidly to see if there might be a dog lurking in the bushes, then went inside.

The wind had blown away the clouds and was gone on other business from the silent meadows. Twilight faded into darkness and a planet showed in early promise of a starlit sky. Night, as it were, had set a single jewel upon its head and, like some dark-eyed lady of the south, it stood upon its listening casement wrapped

Undaunted towers rose above the trees

in the misty garment of the hills. Over woods and field lay a soft beauty that stilled the prattle of our jest. The world hung breathless in the eternal ocean of the purple heavens. Like a ship whose drooping sail is stowed away, it slept upon the glassy surface of the night.

We advanced by a path and stood presently on an open hillside along the lake. A wooded slope climbed sharply to the castle, whose undaunted towers rose above the trees. It was a shallow lake fed by a trickle through the shadows—a pool of lily pads and bending grasses at the bank, and its waters lay in this hollow of the hills like a traveler who has thrown aside his weary boots at twilight in a country inn. The flat tinkle of a bell where belated cattle grazed was but a tavern clock that marked the hour.

Beyond the highroad the Adur ran with the tide now swiftly to the sea, but the murmur of its invitation to the commerce of the world fell here on sleepy ears. Tomorrow these quiet waters will fasten on their boots. They will fall below the dam and lift the burden of mighty ships; but tonight they lie at rest, and the wooded hills and towers show themselves in ghostly outline on the dreaming mirror of their sleep.

A fleet of swans issued from the darkness and drifted across the lake. The silent churn of their propellers threw a waving ripple on the surface; and the heavy walls of Arundel, although they have withstood the guns of revolution, rocked in the small commotion of their advance. It is a phantom armada, bound to the fairy conquest of the night. They drift from shadow

A ghost in the gardens of a misty paradise

into shadow, and again the woods and castle bend forward like an ancient Psyche to behold their unwrinkled beauty in the pool.

This is the park of Arundel and on this turf for a thousand years men have walked and felt the beauty of lengthening shadow and the peep of silver stars. The uproar of Saxon wars has filtered through these trees, but it has been purged of strife and agony. The clamor of Norman William, which pounded once upon the lodge, put here its sword aside in the peaceful magic of the night. The noise of conquering armies found at last this meadow by the lake, and it dropped its spear to linger through dark uncounted hours. On these hills of Arundel the frail beauty of the past wanders forever like a ghost in the gardens of a misty paradise, and the wind among the trees is the rustling of her silken skirt.

In all England I have discovered no spot so beautiful to come upon at evening when the year pauses in the expectant hush of summer. Here if anywhere the heroine of a lovelorn tale might walk with a hound in leash. A hooded falcon might properly sit upon her wrist as in an ancient story. Or perhaps the lady steals from an unguarded casement to seek her mate in the shadows of the grassy bank, and in the metaphor of stars and hill they tell to one another the long duration of their love.

Where are these ladies, the whispered word, the kiss, the moons of yesteryear? The towers of Arundel rise in darkened outline, without the candle of a waiting signal. The spaces of these hills are bare of sandaled

feet. No footfall sounds beneath the trees. No soldier stands in tryst upon the grassy bank. And the wind that knows all tunes of human love and passion roams restless through the dark and sighs with melancholy longing for these nights to come again.

For once Bill was silent, nor did he weave even a silent plot. He created no Pomfret-Dawken here to soil the night, but lay quiet with his head upon his elbow, lost in meditation until the darkness fell upon us.

What quality resides in beauty to stir the heart? At Killarney, also, there is magic in the night. One believes in fairies in this west of Ireland where men are barely tamed to the harness of modern thought. All the air is charged with superstition. The sudden gust that sweeps across the hills blows hard against the reason, and one hears the far-off voice of phantom creatures who live within the pathless woods. This thing that they call the Celtic twilight broods upon these waters of the west, and man's love cannot run its course without the intrusion of ghostly forces.

By Italian lakes, also, romance takes up its lodging, but not in homespun. By the quiet unruffled waters of the south love is dressed in silk. It stands at a casement to be painted by the eternal moon, whose brush is apt to comely pattern through centuries of practice. On its listening ear there falls the sound of forgotten songs, and it wears a satin slipper to be kissed. It is not entirely the south land's starlit waters, its mountains that shield them from the world, that persuade us to romance. In the glistening night the air is filled with the memory of a thousand summers

whose songs have strummed their passion. Laura in a dress of green yielded her prudence to a kiss. Medici and d'Este! And did not Beatrice, once upon a time when the world was new, listen here to Dante's song and by surrender grow immortal? These are the memories that fill the languorous air. If now in our sunken days of prose thought seeks a woman here, the quest is but cousin to that eternal love that prospers in the south.

Experience that is born on land runs quickly from our recollection, but if it be cradled on a lake there in our heart it thrives. And if a man might choose a spot to tell a woman of his love, let it be in such environment. For nature is his ally, and the harsh accents of his voice borrow music from the circumstance of night where quiet waters lie in shadow. Here deepens a sympathy of thought so that each shall know the other in occasion when the portals of the heart are loose. Misty forms arise, too timid for the day; and these two stand on the margin of a world where dreams may prosper in the silence. And even if their love shall drift to an evil end and they spend their lives apart, always in the minds of both a tenderness must linger and the hour be one of softened memory.

I wonder at the flight of meditation that runs upon the blind highways of the dark. A bell that sounds upon the night is a soft alarm to rouse the recollection. Shadows crowd upon my window. They skip upon the clouds and roam the purple avenues of thought, if perchance they find the lodging of a word once spoken whose abandoned echo now grows dim.

Having waxed monstrously sentimental by the darkening shore of Arundel's lake, we hoisted ourselves stiffly from our elbows and went back to the village. Shutters were pulled upon the windows. Lights were out. We beat upon the jeweler's door, took candles from the table of the lower hall and climbed the stairs to bed.

A volume of Mrs. Southworth stuck out from the others as a hint, so I plucked it down, put my candle on a chair and read for a sleepy hour.

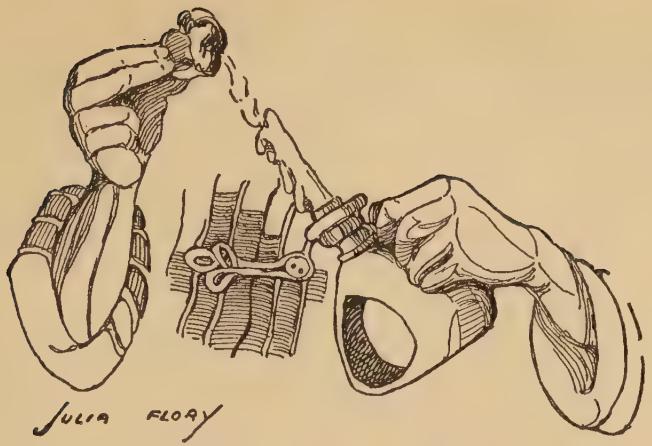
In the silly tale there was a good sister with yellow hair that fell about her knees, which is easy enough in novels; and a bad sister who was of raven tress and an evil depth of flashing eye. These two, each in her opposite fashion, loved a gentleman whose name was Marmaduke, and looked as such. And at first he was in disguise on some noble business of the King. The good sister loved him deeply, but with that timid modesty which was once the fashion and takes a bit of time to work its ends. But the bad sister saw through his false mustache and knew him to be a duke of many dirty acres. So she jilted the country yokel who had once been the top of her ambition and tempted Marmaduke to kiss her lips; which in these old stories is almost as good as marriage. It was, of course, a horrid thing to do and was frowned on by Queen Victoria as she read the book reposing on her imperial elbow in one of the beds in the aforesaid towers of Arundel.

But Marmaduke, although he wavered dangerously in this early chapter, discovered presently that the brunette was no better than she should be and that the

golden sister with the long hair would make the more wholesome Duchess. "Dear heart," he said, "I have loved you long in secret." Which was a bit stretched, considering that early hug. So everything worked out satisfactorily on the final page when they kissed at last beneath the moon to be happy ever afterwards.

The yellow blot upon the page was, beyond a doubt, the old Queen's tear; and at this (Bill's hint) she rolled over toward Prince Albert. I dropped the book upon the floor, blew out the candle and fell asleep.

So much for a sentimental reader.



He . . . flavors his thumb with sulphur

CHAPTER XXIV

WE JOURNEY TO GOODWOOD FOR THE RACES

I WAS awakened by a horrid smell. It was broad daylight. I sat up and turned toward Beezer. He lay upon his elbow, toasting a water-biscuit at the candle. It was a soiled and blackened crisp and was emitting a foul odor of burning dough, tallow and raw thumb. Beezer has a weakness for singeing food and he welcomes these primitive lodgings without electric lights so that he can cook himself smoky little messes at a candle as he lies abed. Marshmallows are his usual *couchant déjeuner sans fourchet*, and he carries with him always a paper sack of pink ones. If there is no candle he lights a succession of matches and flavors his thumb with sulphur. Martyrdom would be no trial to him, if he might be roasted with a sticky lollipop in hand.

I took a bath. I mention this not for personal reasons—for me a hundred baths unsung!— but merely that I may record the strange contrivance that stood against the tub for heating water. It is plumbing that always engages a stranger in a foreign land; and Americans are a bit snooty, for we have rolled all arts together to perfect the bath tub. And now that I have mentioned this device I cannot describe it. It looked as I imagine the first marine engine looked as it chugged up the Hudson. One applied a match to a burner, and after it had flickered sullenly for a half hour and the water had dribbled through a coil of pipes, a tepid stream flowed into the tub in an apologetic manner with the offer of its service to do its best with the assistance of a thin sliver of brown soap. I am not the creature of a movie, as at Hastings for a penny, so we shall leave my performance here upon the threshold.

As we were at breakfast the party from London strolled in one by one in easy negligence—the men in flannel or knee breeches, the women in sport skirts and gay silk jersey. And each, as he waited for his eternal sole and bacon, fell to the perusal of a newspaper which he braced against a teapot or sugar bowl. There was some discussion of conflicting baths—of George who shivered in a bathrobe, as he waited for his turn,—of Archie who splashed himself from the hand basin, having tried three times the knob. And then the talk fell to last night's bridge and a point of finesse, of tips upon a favorite horse; until one by one, with bacon stored away, they rose and sauntered out.

"Well," said Bill, "how about it? Shall we go to Goodwood?"

"I have seen" I answered, "many horses in my time, and few of them would give me delight to see again."

My mind wandered to bitter recollection.

"Once I rode a horse—an ugly brute, tall and sullen, with cruel fangs in front. I was as a child, all steeped in ignorance. I climbed aboard. I say, I climbed aboard. It was my mistake that to adjust myself I seized the creature's ear."

"And did he run?" asked Beezer.

"I do not know," I answered, "I fell off before he started."

"But the crowds!" said Bill. "The excitement!"

"The crowd was small, and devoid of sympathy."

"I spoke of Goodwood," Bill replied.

"Pardon me," I answered. "My thought was lost in other things. And shall we walk?"

"God forbid. We can get seats in a char-à-banc."

"And how about our oath always to go afoot?"

"It has been already broken."

"By stress of weather only."

And so it was agreed that by bus we would go to Goodwood.

By this time there was confusion in the street. All the village was on the curb, with shops neglected. Motors streamed through—private cars with gentle blue-nosed folk piled high with rugs; char-à-bancs and vans of beer, each with a honk of warning as it turned from the high street into a narrow lane that led toward Goodwood. There were a few horse-drawn vehicles—

carts with lunches swung between the wheels, brakes with footmen standing in the rumble with long horns. Now and then a bicycle scuttled for safety to the curb. A motor dray pounded by, housing the gear of a scenic railway which was to be set up for a thriftless penny. The flimsy cars were stored on end and the dirty canvas peaks of St. Gothard were folded across the top as guard against the threatened rain. This dray was so large that it had to back twice before it could make the narrow turn, and the delay piled up behind it a congestion of impatient horns. And already, as thirst rises early on a holiday, the tavern across the street drove a prosperous business in beer.

Our acquaintances of breakfast were going over in a brake, and it stood in front champing with excitement for its tardy load; as if each horse churned himself to lather in ambition that has denied that he run for the Steward's Cup. Was not the blacksmith's three-year old to enter—a neighbor up the street? Each horse nodded fiercely and shook with impatience at the inhibition of his harness.

Porters ran about with luncheon hampers and ropes to tie them. And wherever they tied them first, presently they took them off and tied them some place else. A tapster came at a trot, nursing a case of beer against his chin. Umbrella and shawls were handed up. A rubber coat, that had been forgotten, was fetched and tossed in. Galoshes were missing—Archie's, perhaps,—and someone ran to find them. There was a jest lest husbands and wives should sit together, and Sallie and George—being under suspicion—were told they might perch upon the rumble with conscience as their guide.

Endless motors turn the corner, and carts and drays, vans and bicycles and carriages. Goodwood is the moon, and these the rising waters.

We had ourselves by this time engaged seats in a motor, and our company was a man and his wife. She had been lately on a trip to Toronto where her brother lived, and it was apparent that she nagged her husband to settle there. For this pair, again, the colonies seemed the only hope of better living. There were five of us crowded in the tonneau, and we all sat thin and trod on one anothers' toes.

We detoured through Slindon, and it is here that Hilaire Belloc is said to live. I leaned from the window and found an old house within a garden that I can only hope is his. "If I ever become a rich man," I repeat again his verses,

> Or if ever I grow to be old,
> I will build a house with deep thatch
> To shelter me from the cold,
> And there shall the Sussex songs be sung
> And the story of Sussex told.
>
> I will hold my house in the high wood
> Within a walk of the sea,
> And the men who were boys when I was a boy
> Shall sit and drink with me.

We had passed the house before I could discover whether there was deep thatch upon it. But as Slindon is fully six miles from the sea, it must be that Belloc is still young and poor.

Nothing that Hilaire Belloc has written bears a

deeper charm than his *Four Men.* It is no more than the account of a walk from the border of Kent to this district of Slindon, but the pages are so rich in beauty

I will build a house with deep thatch

and humor that I have not dared read it lately lest I abandon my own book in disgust. I still have dirty work ahead and must not shatter my morale. It is the

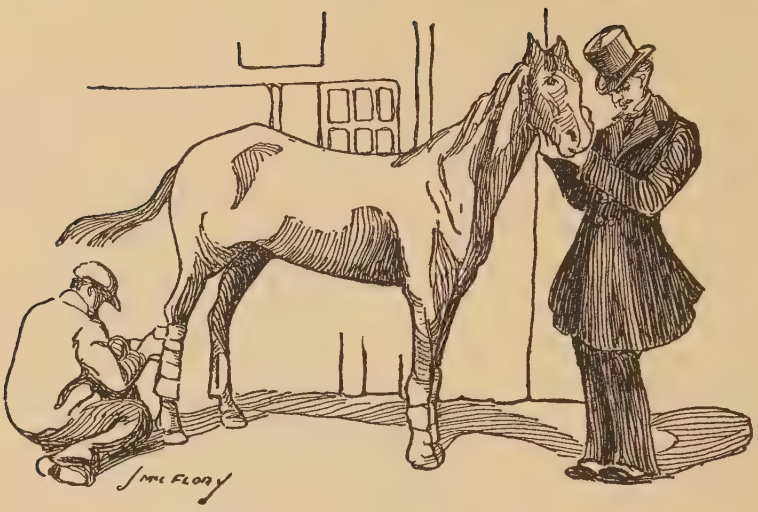
kind of book that goes better in a second reading, and best in a third. Its wisdom is packed within an easy style that runs without a whip.

At Slindon we turned west with Eartham on the north. It was at Eartham that Hayley lived, and I hope that fact interests you more than it does me. I am reminded, but with a difference, of William Dean Howells's visit to the accredited tomb of Tasso. "I went" he writes, "and paid this homage in the coal-cellar in which was never imprisoned the poet whose works I had not read."

But Cowper came to Slindon to visit Hayley, all of which is recorded in his letters. The two men spent their mornings on Latin and Italian poetry, but Cowper's own verse lagged. "I am in truth," he wrote, "so unaccountably local in the use of my pen, like the man in the fable who could leap nowhere but at Rhodes, I seem incapable of writing at all except at Weston."

Hereabouts we crossed the Stane Street, which ran in Roman days direct from Chichester to London and is still used for a course of several miles. Straight it ran to the shoulder of Leith Hill, and it is amazing how a direction concealed by different levels could hit so squarely on the mark without a survey.

Presently we entered Goodwood Park in a close procession of motors. An American fancies a racing meet as a public thing; yet here was a concourse gathering on private land where giant trees hung upon the road and meadows swept across a valley of grazing cattle. The race course is at the north end of the Park, and for a mile or so we followed the crowded traffic.



A prime minister might turn veterinary

CHAPTER XXV

THE GOODWOOD RACES

GOODWOOD is the estate of the Duke of Richmond, and the entrance fee of several thousand persons must do its bit toward the upkeep of the house. In a country where an unsocial brand marks down the merchant it seems odd to a foreigner that a duke can set up a turnstile on his meadows and exact shillings without staining his coronet. But the King is often a guest on these days of racing, so doubtless his escutcheon is unblemished. Anything that concerns a horse is entirely proper to the English. A prime minister might turn veterinary without shattering his position.

There are persons so keen for sport that the back-

ground of it is nothing. Yet when Goodwood was first called "glorious," nature must have had a hand in the choosing of the adjective. The course is in high, wooded country, with hills and extensive prospects everywhere across an emerald world. On the morning of our arrival one might have thought that nature had selected its brightest pigments and whistled to the rain to keep the color fresh. We left our motor in a meadow where several hundred cars were parked, and, crossing a grove, came upon the buildings along the course.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, because of foreign wars, horse-racing declined; but when Napoleon was defeated the sport revived. The Goodwood races were established in eighteen hundred and two, but languished until about eighteen twenty-four. There is now a meet of three days each year.

The course is not flat like a trotting oval, for it lies in a rolling country. Nor is it shaped like a monstrous egg, with the start and finish at a single wire. Goodwood is several courses, all of different lengths. Each course starts from its own station in the meadows to join the others in the home stretch. For a spurt it is a straightaway along a waving surface, and when the pistol is fired every one stands on tiptoe for a first sight of the ponies as they appear above the hilltop. A longer race is dispatched in a distant meadow, with a gruelling slope to the level of the final stretch. These courses are of close-cut turf, rolled to the smoothness of a golf fairway.

In my ignorance I had expected to see a huge stand as at an American trotting race. There were stands,

of course, but they were low and small, shaded up in price to fit a range of purse and social station. In connection with each of these open stands there was a pavilion where tea and refreshments were served. One of these was private for the Duke of Richmond and his guests. The thrifty thousands of slimmer purse view the races from a hillside beyond the finish of the course, where they eat peanuts and candy, tether down their offspring and spread their lunches underfoot. It seemed to us a jollier thing to mix with this crowd upon the hill.

I know a horse only as a strange creature with steaming nostrils and a leg at each of his four corners, a brute whose upper lip quivers with emotion. An old lady at a football game is not so ignorant as I am at a race. And so it was the throng of people that chiefly interested me.

After each race the gentlefolk descend from their stands. They visit their pavilion or walk about the enclosure that is theirs, guarded by fences from the rabble—the men wearing the hat that is called the derby, tail coats and spats, with field glasses hanging from their shoulders. The throng from the hill crowd the track, where they saunter idly, speak to friends, listen to the touts and lay their bets among the bookies. The touts are everywhere, in any place where one of them can clear a circle and draw a crowd around him for the sale of tips. The bookies stand in a long line beyond the track, each with a board on which odds are chalked, and here he hawks for customers.

The King stood in his pavilion lifting his glasses to the crowd with an air of wistful longing as if he wished

to be an equal comrade. As he stood thus an old soldier with a crutch was brought up to him and, by the King's glance and gesture, it was apparent he asked the battle where he took his wound. Both men talked with their hats on and they parted with a bow from each. No more than a dozen of us had leaned upon the paddock fence to witness this encounter, nor could I see that the other five thousand persons turned once from the babble of the racing touts. This, I think, is a distinctive quality of the English. They insist on their own liberty free from interference, and they permit the King to have his liberty as well unpestered by their curiosity.

We joined the throng and listened to the touts. One of them had lost his leg above the knee and he used a crutch with great agility. He drew the crowd around him by bawling out that he was Lashwood, Lashwood himself, England's Premier Jockey, winner of three Steward's cups, friend of all the trainers. In his head, and here he tapped it with a mighty thump, reposed all the secrets of the stables. Were any horse off his feed, the news ran first to him. In a raw gust he yelled. As he uttered these proud boasts he strode up and down upon his crutch with a fierce scowl and challenge against anyone who might dare deny the truth of what he said. Lashwood! Lashwood himself! Then he laid bank notes here and there upon the grass within the circle of his audience and strode off and seemed to forget them. I could not discover what this abandonment signified unless it was the careless wealth that was promised on the buying of a tip.

Lashwood, of course, had competition. A great fellow with brown skin—perhaps an East Indian—was dressed in colored turban with oriental robes; and he stood ready to consult the obscure oracles of his native land which, by his report, had never failed to name the

Lashwood! Lashwood himself!

winner. His wife was a mite of an English girl, pale and undernourished, who tended a cart and baby on the edge of the crowd. Occasionally the baby was lifted out, and it crawled upon the grass under everybody's feet. The mother seemed singularly detached, as if, through custom, she accepted the crowd as a proper

nursery; and presently she gathered up the child, and squatting on the ground, she sung it off to sleep amid the uproar.

Another tout clamored that he was a veterinary of a famous stable, just from consultation. Others guessed from hearsay. His was a bedside knowledge. "I know what I know," he bawled. "It's the old Doc what's tellin' yer. It's written on this here paper—the pony as'll win the Steward's Cup. Jest a shillin' fer a fortin!"

And still another tout persuaded us that he was of higher station than any of his rivals. He wore a silk hat, a frock coat and spats, and he carried a pair of field glasses. All in all it was an outfit that shamed the King. Much of his speech was in derision of the East Indian. What did a nigger know of racing? Let him go back to his alligators! It was an English sport—the sport of gentlemen. This, with a gesture toward the glory of his spats!

Once in a while someone stepped forward with a shilling and was given a folded bit of paper with a horse's name upon it. But, for the most part, the crowd took the business as a circus without a charge; and from tout to tout they wandered wherever they heard the loudest voice.

There were six races on the card. When the race was ready a bell was rung and the crowd was swept back by bobbies to the fence. The ponies were led out from the stables, wrapped in blankets. Up the jockies jumped and rode them off to the proper station.

In the select pavilions tea and biscuits were served, and on our plebeian hill vendors of candy, popcorn and

chocolate bars kept in endless movement, barking for a customer. There was no provision for feeding the general throng. The races began shortly after one o'clock and thousands must have left home after an early breakfast. Many of these brought their own lunch and spread it before them on the hillside, shifting now and then a plate of sandwiches as it was nearly stepped on. There was a booth where one could buy a dirty mess of stewed eels, and another for bread and sausage. We lunched on chocolate bars for they seemed the cleaner food.

Goodwood is a family party, and no child is left at home. If he is too young for food that crunches, a bottle with a rubber tip is found for him in the chaos of the hamper. Nor is grandmother left in the back parlor with her knitting. Occasionally, a small row flared up, usually when someone stepped upon a cherished gooseberry tart, or pushed in and spoiled the view. "Where do yer think yer a-shovin' to? I say, buddy, can't yer move a bit?" But mostly the crowd was good-natured, and the purlieu of each man's hamper was his castle.

Some of the races we saw at a distance from the hill. For others we went down and stood in the tall grass beside the course. For one we beheld the start, wandering a half mile off across a meadow. And after the pistol was fired and the ponies sprang to life, a silence fell upon the fields; broken only by distant shouting and the hum of bees among the clover. Great clouds paused in flight and seemed to turn an eye to learn which was the winner of the cup.

But of the races I can say little. The ponies looked strangely alike—slim-legged creatures of a vast excitement. There were a great many of them, and they all seemed of a restless disposition. In their impatience for the pistol they backed all ways at once in a tangle of confusion. There was an equal number of jockies in colored jackets who were mounted on most uncomfortably short stirrups, as if a pain had seized them in the middle. It was, however, a pretty sight when they leaped at the pistol in a shower of turf. As any pony nosed ahead a great shout arose, and the hoofs struck out a gay staccato like the swish of windy rain upon a glass.

Back we came from the meadow. The crowd was swarming on the track. Somewhere in the archives of Goodwood it is written who won the Steward's Cup. None of us knew. We thought of asking as we came away, but kept silent out of shame. It seemed too much like an inquiry at the final whistle whether Yale or Harvard had won. But the blacksmith's three-year-old was beaten, and this was our only grief.

In a thick procession we motored to Arundel. Beezer, to stay his stomach, singed a water biscuit.

At the long table, the group from London gathered in for dinner. A newspaper was divided and scanned for tips upon the next day's racing. Shilling bets were laid.

That kind of smile that girls bestow upon a duke

CHAPTER XXVI

IN WHICH WE SEE A GENTLEMAN BEREFT OF REASON

IT rained again next morning, so it seemed best to lay over for another night at Arundel. Nor could we have been lodged at Chichester, whither we were bound, because of its proximity to Goodwood. We were fretted and restless for the road, yet in retrospect this day of intermittent showers stands a tiptoe above its mates. Arundel is a town one might choose to be his island in a flood. Presently we knew each shop, the merchandise on every counter, the cat that yawned behind a window, the cobbler who repaired

the spoke of my umbrella. We got by heart the railway pamphlets of the Norfolk Arms, with their seductive pictures of coast and mountain. And I think that such advertisements must be of extra profit here in England where rainy days are frequent and tourists are cooped indoors with scanty occupation.

We inquired after breakfast if Arundel Castle were open to visitors, but it appeared that the Duke of Norfolk was now in residence and that the door was locked against the public. The Duke, we were told, is a lad of delicate health. He lives here with his mother; or, as the English put it, his mother resides here with the Duke, her son. It was at Arundel Castle that Charles Lamb once lost his sweep among the chimneys and here he laid him at last, all smirched and blackened, to sleep in one of Percy's lordly beds. We shall see presently these chimneys from the top of a nearby hill, and we shall look for a dusky waving broom at some upper vent to mark the safe passage of the smoky tunnel.

The weather cleared toward noon, after we had memorized the glory of the Midland Railway, and we set out on foot across the meadows of the park and through the woodland of its northern hill. Even at this prosaic hour the lake was beautiful; and I must suppose that the waters overslept the night and delayed their journey to the sea. And the lovely ladies of Mrs. Southworth, also, were still abed—the honest blond who sighed for Marmaduke, her dark sister of blacker thoughts.

Presently a young lad rode by upon a horse, and with

him were two girls in smart attire who gave him that kind of smile that girls bestow upon a duke. Did the prettier one hope some day to be a duchess? Her hair, escaping from her hat, was of a sunny brown. Let us think that she was the good sister and that Marmaduke will kiss her in a final chapter. And the lad really may have been the duke, although against description he seemed a sturdy fellow with bronzed face.

Across this wood, athwart the road, there runs a Roman trench overgrown with mighty oaks that guarded the hill more than fifteen hundred years ago. At the top the country opened to the north, with the ribbon of the Adur—as if it were a lazy snake—curling in the meadows far below.

We now turned down to Amberley Station beside the river, where we drank beer at the Bridge Hotel. The proprietor was Archibald Chew, "which" said Bill, "is a fitting name." A placard in the tap announced a village fête at Amberley, which lies a mile upstream.

Shooting Balloons!
Football! Bowling the Stump!
Human Aunt Sally! Klondyke Pennies on a Plate!
Balls and Buckets! Draught Darts! Skittles!
The Cheerio Dance Band!
Admission 3d!

How did one bowl the stump? What was a human aunt Sally? And who would not shake a frisky leg for threepence to the music of the Cheerio band?

There was also a notice of an auction sale of a thou-

sand acres belonging to the Duke of Norfolk, including the castle of Amberley. We are to see Amberley after we have had our beer, and to sit for an hour on the soft turf within the ruined walls.

I have spent description recklessly and my purse is bare of words. Yet here one might lie of a sunny afternoon while the pageant of forgotten days weaves the fabric of a dream. Unroofed rooms stand open to the sky where banquets once were held. Grasses wave on ruined walls. Archways lead nowhither except to the spacious corridors of fancy. On the stone ledge of a window an artist sat, attempting in futile line to catch the waving grasses on his pad.

We returned by train to Arundel for a late lunch. I have said that the Duke of Norfolk was a Roman Catholic and that the town was his property and creature. Yet near the station was a notice pasted on a wall:

The Protestant Light of Truth!
versus
Priestcraft!

"Aha!" said Beezer, "there's dirty work at the crossroads."

It rained again in the early afternoon but cleared at six o'clock, and so we walked five miles to Littlehampton and ate an excellent dinner at a hotel upon the sea. The room was crowded with smart folk who had been all day at Goodwood, and they quite shamed our knee breeches. A band gave a concert afterward on the common, but its blare was lost in the uproar of the

windy sea. It was Neptune who sounded the noisier percussion. He gave no heed to the director's nod and finger, but thumped quite out of tune and measure. The band must have played blindly on a contract, for the chairs were empty of an audience.

We saw a movie. The show was half done and the man at the door would not accept admission. I was so stunned by this that I tipped him the price of the seats. Home we went to Arundel in a bus where boys and girls made furtive love within the darkness.

And once more next day it rained. Our prayers, after all, were not so strong as Cuthman's. A cold rain, still, that chilled the bones! It had been our plan to walk to Chichester and stay there through Sunday, when the town would be quiet after its racing uproar of three days. We stood after breakfast at the carriage entrance of the Norfolk Arms, but found no comfort in the gray promise of the sky. So, once more, we broke our oath and went by bus. And what might have been a day of long adventure through pretty villages was but an hour of restless jolting with rain smeared upon the glass. Boxwood Priory, which we had marked for lunch, was no more than a tower above the trees and a halt where an old lady unveiled her cotton stockings and was hoisted up.

The hotel at Chichester was crowded with those who started late for Goodwood, and the dining room was in the full flourish of excitement. Motors were barking in the street. A brake was putting off with a toot of horns. We ate in the racket of the place, then slipped across the way to the silence of the cathedral.

Chichester is a Roman city and was called Regnum. It lies near the Channel and its cathedral spire appears at sea. Here was the beginning of the Stane Street on which the Roman legions marched to London, and it is said that the sites of ancient camps are still visible to the shrewd eyes of an antiquarian. Then when the Romans left, Cissa, a Dane, took possession of the city; and its present name is a blend of the two invasions. The city is built in the Roman pattern, with four main streets and a market cross at the center where they meet. Except for the week of Goodwood Chichester is a peaceful cathedral town, with bookshops of theology and a sprinkling of clergy on its streets. William Collins was born here on Christmas day, seventeen twenty-one. Here he was educated until he went to Winchester. And here he died. And a certain Mr. Hardham, also, was a native, who was a tobacco merchant of Fleet Street, London. David Garrick bought tobacco from him, and extolled it extempore in one of his comic parts.

> A name is all. From Garrick's breath a puff
> Of praise gave immortality to snuff;
> Since which each connoisseur a transient heaven
> Finds in each pinch of Hardham's 37.

And Sir Joshua Reynolds is said to have used none but Hardham's 37; and Goldsmith has recorded it.

> When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios,
> and stuff,
> He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.

Chichester cathedral is mainly Norman, influenced by the earlier walls of Canterbury, but it is touched by many later styles where repairs or additions have been built against the older structure. It lacks the tremendous columns that give grandeur to Gloucester, and as cathedrals go it is but so and so. It is a quiet retreat, however, from the noises of the street.

The cloisters are the lovelier part and it was in their shadowy arcades we met an old gentleman quite flighty in his wits. He passed us sedately but at the turning of the cloisters he gave a little leap into the air and came down with a dancing step. And so sedately until the next turn when he skipped again and went on demurely as before. We trailed him around the square, neglecting the bronze inscriptions, and yet when we caught up with him at the completed circuit his face was set in sober thought as if he compiled a sermon. By his collar he was a clergyman, but some link had snapped within his brain.

"Does he practice the Charleston?" asked Beezer. "That flip of the ankle!"

"God forbid, Rollo," I answered, "that such low dances should invade the church."

"See," said Bill, "how his skip is a syncopation—an elision of a step that throws the weight to the other foot. It is the dropping of a note, an accent delayed that strikes upon the note that follows—an old device of music now new as ragtime."

"And is this permissible in composition?" I asked.

"It is," said Bill, "but much abused in lighter tunes."

"Applied to the working of the brain," I retorted,

"this jump without connective, this conclusion that shifts its stride, is no better than a mild insanity."

"I have known composers," Bill replied, "who should be put in padded cells."

There was a moment's silence of reflection.

"It's my fear" said Beezer at length, "that the old gentleman has bats in his belfry."

"A vulgar phrase, my boy, and one that my cultured readers will hardly understand. Yet its meaning is clear to me. Alas," I added, "his reason totters. Let it be a lesson to you, Rollo, that you ply your book diligently but without excess."

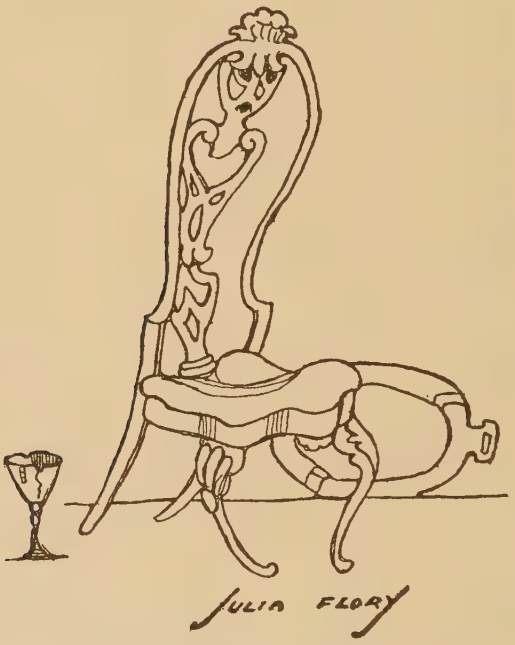
It was now two o'clock with a clear sky, so we decided to walk to Midhurst for the night—twelve miles straight north. There are many shops of antique wares in Chichester and I was at some pains to push Bill through the city and keep him from stagnation in front of brass and china.

A goblet, a platter, a piece of old brass,
A four-post bed and a cup,
A chair with a wheeze that is bent with disease—
For God's sake, Bill, hurry up!

A twelve-mile road runs off to the North
With a kink as it turns the hill.
So why keep your eye on that ill-smelling sty?
It's the world that calls you, Bill.

Over the Downs we must travel by dusk,
And the hills climb a weary pass.
It's a three hours' tramp, you lazy scamp,
So chuck the platters and brass!

I've sat on this curb for a long half hour,
I've rubbed the lint from my pants.
And I'd curse, you old bird, if I thought a foul word,
Would hurry our slow advance.



A chair with a wheeze that is bent with disease

Don't you know that the day is slipping away,
While you flatten your nose on the pane?
I'd smash, if I dared, the glass, but I'm scared,
And I'd break in your head with my cane.

We rested at West Dean in a village church. At Cocking we pitched downhill from lofty country and left the Downs behind. Legend reports that this

country of the Downs was the first to be created when God fashioned the dry land, and that their beacons were His practice for higher mountains. At Cocking, Bill cried out "Oh, my soul!" Nor did a Dublin stout set him entirely on his legs. So he bartered for a motor to lift him the last four miles to Midhurst. Beezer, also, lay off here for tea and toast, so I pelted on alone. It was dinner time when I climbed into Midhurst and went among the inns to find my lazy comrades.

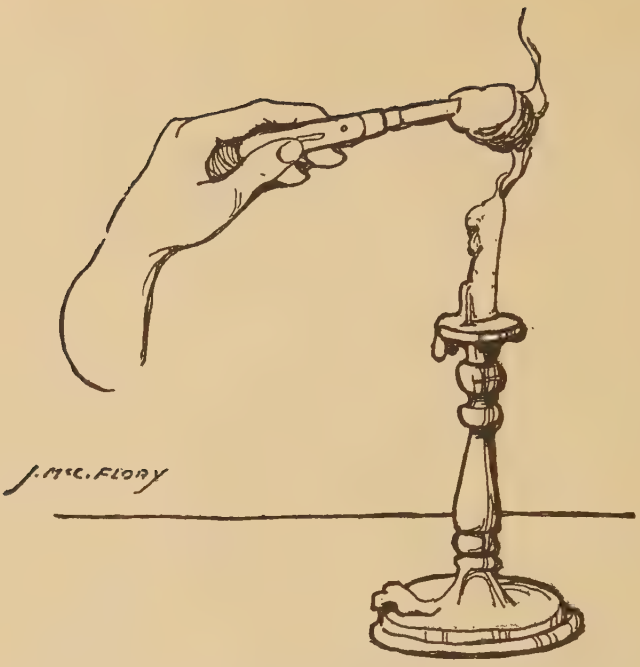
Midhurst sits upon a hill with an open square at top. This is the center of the town and, although I was tired with my sharp walk from Cocking, it seemed a picturesque place of feudal aspect, as if a gate each way might be shut against attack.

Democracy sprawls upon a plain, but a hilltop town is usually of older date and despotic rule. The very steepness, that kept it safe in troubled times from the brawling warfare of the valley, has lamed it in the race of modern progress; for commerce bears a heavy load and cannot climb a hill. In parts of the world still older, as in the Italian mountains or the Alps that hang upon the Riviera, every peak is the lodging of an ancient town driven thither for defense. To see the splatter of houses upon these dizzy pinnacles one might think that from the ancient tide that once roared upward in the valley, these are the wind-caught spray. But Midhurst sits upon a little hill which war might have climbed with cannon.

Our inn was the Angel, a bit below the top at a left-hand turn on the highway to the north. It was a fine old building with candles and musty smell—a resort

These are the wind-caught spray

at week-ends for motorists and sportsmen. It was now Saturday night and, although we had a bed apiece, all rooms were sold for Sunday. A ripe waiter, with a soiled shirt front, did us well at dinner. Then we roamed for an hour about the village and fell again to bed.



Perhaps the horrid smell . . . might be explained

CHAPTER XXVII

NORTH TO HASLEMERE

AT breakfast Beezer reported a disturbance of the night. Having divested himself of clothing in his usual explosive manner—as if he popped with too much dinner—he was climbing to his rosy couch when there came a rapping at the door. Advancing with gusty candle to the summons he was informed by a chambermaid that a lady of wrinkled nerves reposed in the adjoining room—or would repose whenever by God's mercy sundry sounds were quieted

in Beezer's room. Furthermore would Beezer be so considerate as to surrender the key to the door that lay between the rooms so that this rearward postern would be garrisoned and safe. And yet again perhaps the horrid smell that now issued through the keyhole might be explained to still the lady's fright.

Beezer gave up the key, but was innocence itself about the smell and noise. However, he assured the maid that all sounds and smells—if, as and when, issued—would at once abate.

"And were you noisy?" we asked at breakfast.

"Not that I remember," he answered. And then he added slyly, "But now that I think of it—yes, I knocked over a chair three times, dropped my shoes and was probably singing."

"And the smell?" we persisted.

"That?" Beezer grinned upon his bacon. "It was a pink marshmallow," he replied, "that I was toasting at the candle."

Midhurst is a town of contented living. At the week-end, perhaps, a motor clatters in with men who fish or hunt; but on quieter days its mellow buildings stand around its square with hands deep in pocket, and streets slope off the hill all four ways into the woods and meadows of peaceful country. Beneath the town the Rother loops across the valley in shallow course with a message that is carried to the turmoil of the sea. Here leaves and grasses run from home, but they falter at the turn like children who have come upon a highroad at their garden gate where the world spreads wide. A railroad of lazy single track veers to the easy low-

land and spares the town from loud prosperity, and if ever a whistle blows on its infrequent train it is a voice that calls vainly to the hill to join its noisy life. Verses have been made about this railroad, and I suspect that Mr. E. V. Lucas is the author, although he modestly does not confess it.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A single railway line;
For then I know the wood and wold
Are almost wholly mine.

It is a road of only intermittent errand. Its cars are old and they stop at random here and there as if they were retired from active business and picked at daisies in the village stations.

Bill. And where now?

Myself. To Haslemere.

Bill. And have we seen the sights of Midhurst to our entire content?

Myself. Patience yet a bit! Even now as we leave the town we draw near to Cowdray Park.

Bill. And are you to throw another sentimental spasm as once at Arundel?

"We must let the sequel show," I answered.

And now from Bill again. "What is this Cowdray that we are to see?"

Myself. It is the double star of Midhurst. The house was gutted by fire rather less than a hundred and fifty years ago, but the walls stand in a cover of ivy which catches——

Bill. Just so. Spare yourself. I know your style by heart.

Myself. One must write as he can.

Bill. And one can skip as he wishes.

"Just so," I answered.

And in this manner of retort we came to Cowdray Park, and stood upon a little bridge to look upon the ruin of the house. And here I whipped out my notebook and fell to scribbling.

"Let's hear it!" said Bill.

"And then you'll laugh."

"Quite possibly," he answered.

"The open casement of this broken tower" I read, "is a frame for floating clouds; and nature, like a craftsman, dips here his brush in blue and white to fit the changing purpose of the windy sky."

"Is that all?" said Bill.

"Not quite," I answered. "Through lower windows, where peeped once a loaded banquet, meadows are exposed; and at the wide table of the hills sheep are the only guests."

"And you are paid for words like that," said Bill.

"Not much! Not much!" I answered sadly.

And now, in his weakened state, I drew out a guidebook and I read to him as follows, cutting out a bit now and then so as not to overstrain him.

Cowdray, I began, was built in the reign of Henry the Eighth, but it came to its highest fame when Elizabeth was Queen. It seems that Sir Anthony Browne, who then possessed it, got early word that the Spanish Armada had weighed anchor at Corunna.

Straightway he rushed to London and was the first to lay his service at the disposal of the Crown. And so, when the anxious days were passed and the Armada lay shattered on the coast of Ireland, the Queen came in state upon a visit to thank her servant for his loyalty. A pamphlet still exists——

"Are you sure of that?" said Bill.

"I can but take the author's word." And again I stole from Lucas:

"'Upon sight of her loud music sounded. It stopped when she set foot upon the bridge, and a real man, standing between two wooden dummies whom he exactly resembled, began to flatter her exceedingly. Until she came, he said, the walls shook and the roof tottered, but one glance from her eyes had steadied the turret for ever.'"

"Skip that part!" said Bill.

"'At breakfast next morning'" I continued, "'three oxen and a hundred and forty geese were devoured . . . marvellously, nay rather excessively.' And with flattery and food they passed three days."

"It's rather a side light on Elizabeth," said Bill.

"It is. 'On Wednesday,'" I continued, "'the Queen was taken to a goodlie fish-pond (now a meadow) where was an angler. After some words from him a band of fishermen approached, drawing their nets after them; whereupon the angler, turning to her Majesty, remarked that her virtue——'"

"Oh ho!" cried Bill. "Had he never heard of Leicester?"

"'—made envy blush and stand amazed. Having

thus spoken, the net was drawn and found to be full of fish, which were laid at Elizabeth's feet. . . . On Thursday the lords and ladies dined at a table forty-eight yards long, and there was a country dance——'"

"Enough!" said Bill.

Haslemere was our destination for the day. This we could gain by a straight road to the north, or round-about through Cowdray Park at the expense of two or three extra miles. We chose the longer route at a great profit of enjoyment.

Lodsworth was our target, three miles across the park. We were directed to follow a path through a barley field, climb a stile, mount an open meadow, cross a road and continue upon a stretch of pasture and a wood which crowned a hill. It was as dubious as the instruction that Tony Lumpkin gave the travelers—"a damn'd long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way." But before we lost ourselves among the paths that spread confusion in the wood, we lay at ease under an oak that stood above the barley field. Once more it was a stirring day and the wind was busy with the clouds. Give the creature but a broom and it sweeps the cobwebs from the ceiling of its house.

"What! Not again?" said Bill. But I ignored him.

In the foreground, a mile across the meadow, stood the broken walls of Cowdray Castle, mended somewhat by the distance. Above rose the line of the South Downs, with here and there a white road running to the top for a glimpse of ocean. We were on the edge of the Weald—the Wild, as we would say. It is now tamed to village use, but was once a broad belt of marsh and

forest that guarded London from attack. The Downs are flecked with woodland and patched with grain where hedges stitch the fields. There in the dip and crossing of the hills the Devil dug to drown the Saxon churches. In this shade Elizabeth may once have waited for the deer that were driven to her gun. But no smoke rises now from Cowdray Castle. Its heavy feasts are eaten. Cook and Queen have departed to the long horizon of eternity.

Having eased our legs, we crossed the road to a sloping meadow and came upon a herd of deer in the slavish charge of a single leader; for when he halted at our approach, all of his followers stopped. Six hundred mild eyes confronted us in alarm, like a large nursery of children who are told of Bluebeard. Then in a flash—perhaps when the sixth wife is found hanging to her peg—the deer all wheeled about and bolted up the hill, with a frightened little scamper at the rear.

We came presently on a golf course where two men were going badly in the rough. Bill was crying aloud the Hojotoho from the Valkyrie.

"Be quiet!" I said.

"And why?" Bill answered.

"You will annoy the golfers."

"It should inspire them."

But he desisted.

At our question of Lodsworth they informed us that they were strangers down from London; but they pointed loosely to the wood and said that some village, although they knew not its name, was situated about a mile beyond. As we left, one of them lifted nicely with

his niblick from the sand and the ball rolled up near the cup.

We entered a wood of ash and beech, and pushed through brier and grass. And now, being tossed about on bypaths, we came upon an avenue of massive trees. It must once have flanked a road, but the footing now was tangled and neglected. One could believe that it led to the house of a sleeping princess in some forgotten valley of the hills.

And then we climbed to a higher point where a meadow opened up a view. Here we heard a motor horn and came shortly to a highway. And now by frequent question in a mesh of crossroads we came at last to Lodsworth. But these hours we spent in Cowdray Park stand as a memory apart in the pleasure of our trip.

We rested for a pint of beer. And from the village grocer we bought for each of us a hunk of cheese, a pocketful of crackers and a jar of minced chicken which we passed about and speared upon a knife. It was thus we lunched as we tramped ahead.

So, with snatches of tragic opera from Bill between bite and bite, we progressed merrily to Lickfold where a tavern called the Three Horses stood against the road. The cheese and crackers being now launched but stranded in the channel we swept them downward with a pint of beer. Beezer's was as usual a ginger beer. A far-off look came into his eyes. He was homesick for an ice cream soda, and it was in this respect alone that he considers that English civilization fails. If nut sundaes could be scattered through these towns they would fill his cup of happiness.

And now a two-wheeled cart was pushed slowly up the road and an itinerant umbrella mender shared our bench. He lifted his pewter mug, he wiped his lips, he

There will be broken umbrellas to mend all the way to Petworth

spoke of England's distress and her millions out of work. Then he uttered in confidential sadness, "There are too many marriages, and too few funerals." But a

sudden gust of rain blew up the road and he brightened at this hint of better business in his own particular line. "If this squall continues," he said, "there will be broken umbrellas to mend all the way to Petworth."

"Another beer?" said Bill.

"The same!" replied the tinker.

He left us and pushed his cart up the hill, and the flat tinkle of his bell again cried out his wares.

At Fernhurst we rested. It is a picturesque village of ancient cottages that repose about an open square. A half mile away the highroad runs from London, but it swerves off in a curve of hills and Fernhurst hears no more than a distant horn. This is the charm of England. One needs such a slight detour to escape the char-à-bancs, and if he choose a secondary road he walks in peace among sleepy towns that are nested in the trees.

As we lay on the green at Fernhurst we heard the tolling of the village church bell, and soon men and women in sober Sunday black issued from their doors. It would have been an impertinence to inquire whose funeral it was. I like to think that a person of eighty peaceful years came at last to the turf beneath the yews, that grief was hushed in the thought that here was a life complete. In these English villages where the graveyards lie so familiar to the living, death seems but a slight transition from one cottage to another. The lease of a garden plot runs out, and in solemn ceremonial with neighbors all about, another lease is written that is of longer tenure. A new-cut stone is an added chapter to the village annals—a book that runs

for a thousand years with shifting persons in its endless plot. And when the tolling bell has died away, children swing again laughing on the gate, and their jest and cry are as fitting to the peaceful yard as the echoing hymn or the song of wind and bird.

After Fernhurst we came upon the highroad and in an hour we limped into Haslemere hard on dinner time. This is a town at the center of hotels that perch on the nearby advantage of the hills, but we chose the White Horse in the high street as a sufficient hotel that was near at hand. At the crossroads in front is an ornamental lavatory with a plate "To the Memory of Mrs. Stewart Hodgson." Such a useful memorial must please her practical soul, wherever it may be. There is a town hall on the second story, but the whole building smells vilely of disinfectants and authors of verse express their dirty genius on the walls.

As we entered Haslemere the Salvation Army was hard at work upon the curb to save the town from hell. There was a jangling of tambourines to draw a crowd and a young gentleman with pimpled face launched upon a fiery sermon.

When the tambourine was passed I dropped in a sixpence.

"Cue," he said.

Herself, not the Pekinese

CHAPTER XXVIII

A DIVIDEND FOR GUINNESS

HASLEMERE stands in a hollow between Hindhead and Blackdown, six hundred feet above the sea—a prodigious boast in England—and it asserts that it is the loftiest town in all the south, although a careless Alp would stub its toe upon these hills. It was a borough in the reign of Elizabeth. Later, James Oglethorpe sat for it in parliament, and he was the man who founded Georgia and named it for the

King. And Oglethorpe also reformed the English prisons. A friend, thrown into the Fleet for debt, had neglected in poverty the payment of the warder's fees and was cast within a house of smallpox where he died. It was this that stung Oglethorpe toward his reform.

John Tyndall is buried in the town's graveyard and his tomb is a mound of heather, for it was his request that the place of his interment be forgotten. Tennyson lived on Blackdown to the south, and sometimes a company of poets journey down from London with a wreath of laurel and a hamper of lunch and they dispose of each as you might expect. Hindhead to the north held long a reputation for solitary grandeur, but villas and hotels are scattered up the slope and it needs the mist of twilight to restore its lonely magic.

At breakfast we determined to climb Blackdown and if possible see Tennyson's house with neither lunch nor laurel. A lady at the next table was of service with directions, intermingling her remarks with bits of bacon to her Pekinese. She was a widow (herself, not the Pekinese) and had just leased a house on Blackdown, and this was the very morning when she was to move in with trunk, bird-cage and all her furniture.

"And an aspidistra?" suggested Bill. "Surely an aspidistra."

"Quite true," she answered.

She was vastly entertained that we were Americans and she confided that the wealth of Europe had crossed the ocean. Openly she accused us of profiteering in the war's necessities, and yet with a friendly nibbling at her bacon that held no malice. Prosperity had fallen our

way, as once it fell to England when Napoleon in the desolation of his campaigns closed the shops of Europe and England discovered steam to be its servant.

"And what is the name of your dog?" asked Bill.

"Tootsy!" she replied.

"A lovely name," said Bill.

Seizing now our trusty alpenstocks we set out to climb Blackdown. There were frequent signboards directing us to Tennyson's house but we lost it in conflicting paths. As we neared the top we issued from a shadowed lane into open fields of gorse and heather, and the view presently widened to the east and south. It seemed that most of Sussex and Surrey lay exposed, from Leith Hill upon the north marked by a solitary tower to the line of Downs against the sea. Below Bignor Beacon a patch of blue was the English Channel and further east rose the crown of trees at the top of Chanctonbury. And farther still the Downs were lost in mist toward Hastings. We saw the towers of Petworth and the ridge that blocked Chichester from sight. This is the Weald, a valley of meadow and woodland, tamed with village spires.

But it is the eye of fancy that has the widest view from Blackdown. This windy country was the scene of six great invasions against this isle of Britain. In the eastern mist where the hills fall off to marshy land the Romans beached their triremes. And there they built Richborough as a base for further movement. Across this valley their legions cut their way, and a Briton standing the non Blackdown must have caught the sunlight on the polished studding of their shields.

In this valley the Jutes broke the power of Rome. Here, for a third invasion, came the Holy Cross of St. Augustine and his hymns were the return of Latin power in more peaceful dress. And then the Saxons and the Danes! The Normans landed here, and theirs was the sixth invasion. And Wat Tyler started his revolution here. And although Napoleon never landed, every beacon top was piled with faggots to announce his sails upon the rim of narrow sea. These armies parade in the eye of fancy and the wind fetches up their martial tunes.

And now on this sunny morning all across the sky white clouds pelted to the south; and they, it seemed, were a seventh attempt at conquest—a fleet of air in modern war, quite shattered by the high-range barrage of the hills.

Yet still more vivid is the unseen vision of present English life. Village streets, although they hide among the trees, are marked by wall and tower, and men traffic on their errands with gossip of their crops and drought or rain. Kettles sing in kitchens, and there are secret gardens where tea is served behind a flowering hedge. From fields there rise the shouts of sport. Men jog upon the roads until the smoke of twilight leads them home. A man who climbs a hill is half a god, and the spacious world resides within the narrow lodging of his eye.

"I am hungry," said Bill, "my stomach bawls for food." But, as he could not move me from the scene, he led Beezer apart and gave him a singing lesson. I heard them at a distance—Beezer running up the scale with la, li, lo and loo.

I have read that a man does not love a mountain until he has rolled great stones from the top to hear them crash below, until he has staked his wit against a storm and battled for his life on dangerous cliffs. But Blackdown is no more than a hill and there were too many tourists on its slope. To the White Horse for Sunday dinner.

I must now refer to the mightiest exploit of our trip. If you please, a sound of horns!

The White Horse Inn at Haslemere shall be known hereafter because a mysterious stranger drank eighteen short pints of Dublin stout on Sunday afternoon in the garden and departed on Monday all restored. Is not a hotel at Llangollen still preserved in memory for the beer that Hazlitt drank as he read the Heloise? The Mermaid Tavern, the Boar's Head, the Cheshire Cheese persist because famous fellows were the patrons of the tap. We mark with a tablet the solemn house where a great man died, but our thoughts dwell best by his tavern fire where his tongue ran free at midnight. The evil that men do—and so let it be with Bill!

Bill has a habit of delaying his stout until the food is quite consumed. Then he reaches for his mug and, as now the foam has settled, he swishes the shrunken liquor roundabout, gazing at it with meditative eye. And this, if ever, is his braggart hour.

Often, he remarked at Haslemere, often in his student days at Vienna he had drank great bumpers of beer without effect.

"Quarts?" I asked.

"Gallons!" he answered, and a wistful far-off look

stole upon his eyes. He lifted again his pint of stout and as he swished it in a circle his gaze rested on its surface as on the crystal of the past where mighty deeds were written.

"There were giants once—" I began.

"Bah!" he answered. "This Dublin stout is child's milk. It would not hurt a babe." And so he boasted, to the shame of my own youth when a single beer drove me out for air.

"There was a man" I said, "who could leap—but only at Rhodes."

"I can still jump," said Bill.

I appraised the bottle. "How much does it hold?" I asked.

"About three-quarters of a pint."

"I'll pay for sixteen bottles, if you will drink them in two hours."

"When?" said Bill in thirsty accent.

"Now! In the garden."

And so it was arranged, with provision that when the clock struck, the last bubble must be gone and himself sober for a discourse of high philosophy.

We laid the matter before the landlord. Should Haslemere, we asked, be second to Vienna? Should these wooden walls of England yield the day to German gukguk? He scratched his head and replied as a Briton should. He left us and, retiring to the cellar, returned with the announcement that he had counted his bottles and that they were sufficient to put the Teutons into shame.

"Show me the garden!" demanded Bill.

It was a spot of shadowed lawn, and an iron table stood behind a bit of shrubbery. Though a good tavern

He replied as a Briton should

needs no bush for its advertisement, an iron table on the contrary requires it as a shelter in the performance of such a deed as Bill's.

"The very place," said Bill. "Fetch out the stout!"

And so it was provided that sixteen bottles of Guinness were to be gathered into baskets from the cellar and deposited in a huge wheel upon the garden table with a pewter mug as axle.

"Would you like a book to read?" I asked.

"I'll write postal cards to all my pupils," was Bill's reply.

"Is it safe?" I asked.

"You shall read them."

"I think I'd better," I replied.

Bill sucked his fountain pen full of ink, and the stately procession proceeded to the garden.

The bottles were stationed at their posts where they stood like the pins of a mightier game of bowls to be knocked down by four o'clock. Time was called. Bill drew out a post card, addressed it "My dear Gladys," drained a whole bottle in one delicious gulp, and the contest of the bet was started.

Beezer walked out to see the town. I slept for two hours and then, on the tick of time, I arose and repaired to the garden to learn whether the heroic deed was done.

Bill waved a hand as I approached. He stood up and skipped across the lawn, with a snatch of song, "I'm an airman," a tune from the Hastings vaudeville. His necktie had slipped beneath his ear and a smudge of ink was on his nose. But bottles strewed the turf, the post cards were written, the table was bare except for a puddle at the rim.

"And now for high philosophy," I started.

"Phizolophy!" said Bill. "Waz zhall we discuss?"

"No matter!" I replied. "I see your fitness."

Off he marched to bed, with a stiff adherence to rectilinear that dared not swerve.

His bet was won. Dublin stout had been vanquished as easily as Vienna gukguk. The wooden walls of England were still safe. Haslemere stands hereafter as an equal comrade to Llangollen where Hazlitt tipped his mug to Heloise, to the Mermaid and all the sacred taverns where once the poets drank with shouts of verse.

Bill still rested from his Olympian effort through supper. Once I looked in on him, but heard him gurgling as some deep dream of prowess crossed his sleep. So Beezer and I set out in the early evening to climb Hindhead.

Our way led rather tamely past the village shops of gaudy trinkets—cheap jewelry to tempt a shilling—past the railroad station, then turned up a shady road among pretty cottages and villas where rich folk from London spend their summers. There were boarding houses, too, with hot and cold laid on. In a half hour the road popped out from the trees and fell to be a wagon trail and then at last a path through shrub and heather, for a sweep of wind holds down the growth.

This common is a place of crowds upon a holiday. The great road from London to Portsmouth circles below the crown of the hill and here idle folk loose a hamper from their motor and bear it to the top for a picnic lunch. From the hotels upon the slope it is a parade of an afternoon. Pet dogs sniff along the paths

and children are at hide and seek among the heather. Lovers, too, walk arm in arm and kiss in open boast to Mrs. Grundy. Nurse maids wheel their babies on these paths, and fat folk catch their breath with knees that are weak from climbing. And just below, the motor traffic sweeps around the curve and honks a warning to the resorts upon the Channel that fires be lighted and beds be aired.

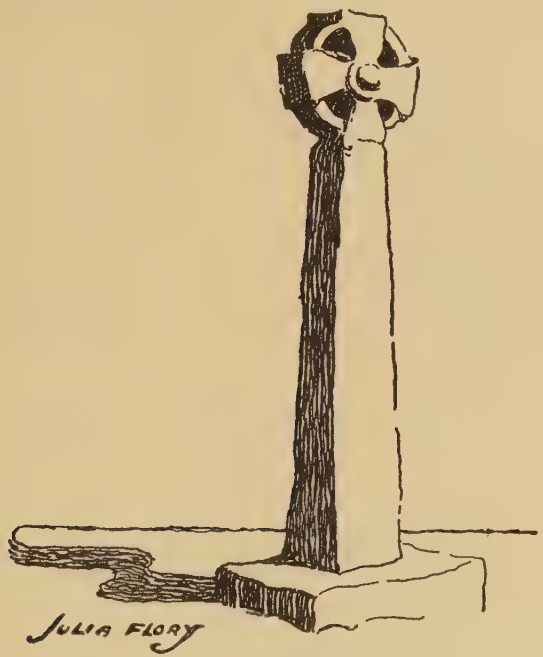
But twilight folds the world in mist. The jest of cockney entertainment sinks into the stillness of the night. The pulse of traffic skips a beat and dies away. The hotels flash but dimly in the thickened air. If lovers walk they tread a secret path, whispering of precious matters.

For night is uncaptured by our advance. All day, like children in a nursery, we clutter the green carpet of the world with toys and call it progress. We set up little bridges and lay our metal tracks. We push a train about and clang a tiny bell. We mount block on block until a tower is built. But night sweeps bare our trivial occupation. Thick shadows come like grandsires to the hearth when games are done. The world, with shallow playthings laid away, is but a tumbled ridge of darkened mist held once more in the unconquered realm of night.

There is a pillar at the top of Hindhead that marks an unforgotten murder, and here Beezer and I stood until stars were scattered in the sky. Lovers walked only on their secret paths. A smudge of lights was a village that went to bed. Hills had drawn a misty cover to their chin. There was silence except for the moaning of the wind, as if it wandered in the blind confusion of the land and sought vainly its companions of the sea to make a drunken night of it.

We were in bed when Bill tapped on the door.

"Did I win the bet?" he asked in that kind of whisper that actors use for the persuasion of an upper gallery.



There is a pillar at the top of Hindhead

"You did," I answered. "Go back to sleep!"

"I want to sing the Air-man."

We admitted him. He carried three glasses and a bottle of stout.

"It's a hair of the dog," he said, and he poured out a taste of it into each glass.

And so we drank to his recovered health, and his footsteps faded down the hall.

"All right here?" he asked

CHAPTER XXIX

A SHORT DAY ENDING WITH A CHORUS

HASLEMERE next morning went about its business, evidently unaware of Bill's mighty contest with gukguk. Hindhead, also, returned no doubt to dull suburban use, and meat and kippers were peddled as usual up to Blackdown. At breakfast the landlord inquired of Bill his health.

"Prime," said Bill.

The landlord rubbed his stomach. "All right here?" he asked.

"Child's milk," said Bill, "harmless to a babe."

"You'll be sure to sign our book," said the landlord.

"With pleasure," answered Bill.

And so the record stands, and the inn is famous.

We sauntered to the railway station, as this was the day when George was to come from London. From a posted sheet of trains we learned that expresses arrived every hour or so. One was presently coming in, so we bought platform tickets to be close at hand. At these crowded stations one may look upon a train darkly as through a glass without expense, but if he would mix with the passengers and hotel runners on the platform he must procure a ticket with a penny in the slot.

"He doesn't seem to be aboard," said Beezer, when the train had pulled away and the platform cleared.

"Quite true, Rollo," I replied. "I commend you on the clearness of your observation. Pink marshmallows are doubtless excellent brain food."

And now it was arranged that Beezer and I were to walk to Guildford and that Bill was to meet all trains for George and come on in a public bus. If they overtook us they were to alight for such part of the twelve miles as might be left. It was hard on noon when we fitted on our rucksacks.

We lingered a bit at Greys Wood and I pointed out to Beezer the inn and the house of the Widow Winter where I had once put up on a cycling trip. Here were the steps where I had sat with the friendly chemist to boast of the versatility of American drug stores. Here was the path to the hilltop which I had climbed with the widow's wagging dog. It seemed a homelike place, as villages must if one has passed the night and returns with seasoned recollection.

We ate at the Brook Inn two miles beyond. It was a bank holiday and a crowd of hungry folk filled the dining room, with a rush of platters in the corridor. We ate in the sitting room, and this was the room where I had had my supper on this same cycling trip. Prosperity had swept away the older furniture and it was stuffed with chairs of shining leather. Grandfather's crayon portrait which had stood upon an easel was now removed. I asked the waitress if she recalled four dusty travelers who came once at twilight and found all rooms full. One was a lad and he went by the name of Gingerale. Perhaps she remembered his attack on the bacon. But she met me with a vacant stare.

Our lunch was bread and milk, with a slab of beef for Beezer.

"Why," I asked, "are English novels so full of food?"

Beezer did not know.

"The persons of the older novelists are always eating. In Dickens alone there are a thousand dinners served. If a chapter lags a roast is fetched in. And why is this?"

He had no answer.

"How can such an output of words," I continued, "arise from the monotony of beef and bacon, mutton, a sole, a boiled potato, a plate of string beans and a raspberry tart? French stories do not always cram themselves with cooking, Beezer, although their cooking delights the palate by its variety. It is at their kitchens that a sniff might justly start a sonnet."

"It's not bad beef," said Beezer, descending on his cow.

"It is a noble animal," I answered, "but much abused."

Presently Beezer pushed back his plate.

"You are done," I said. "And now a pink marshmallow, and we'll be off."

"Have you a match?" he asked.

"Here is the box," I replied. "A tidbit of roast thumb, and then we'll start."

"Cue," said Beezer.

As we walked on through the afternoon Beezer and I played a game, with motors as its counts. A car that advanced upon us was a score for him, and to me fell the motors that passed us from the rear. A bicycle was half a point. It was thus that we debauched our minds. At Godalming a cycling club went by and he scored his triumphant goal. I did remark to him, however, that somewhere hereabouts stood the Charterhouse School, that once it had occupied a building in London hard by Smithfield and that Thackeray had been a student there.

And so we walked along the river Wey until the hill at Guildford popped in sight. We sat for a ginger beer at the entrance of the town, then sought the Lion Hotel. At dinner time Bill and George arrived by bus.

George, of course, was a reinforcement to the discussions of music. Beezer at once fastened on him, and pumped him dry with questions. Was Sir Henry Wood the equal of our own Sokoloff who has played in London? And how often was the Ring performed? George, moreover is convulsed by Bill.

"You'll kill me, Bill!" he cries, "you and your stout."

"Food for babes," says Bill.

Nor have I met men of pleasanter temper than these three for a walking trip.

Bill's itinerant drug store (see catalogue made at Brighton!) is George's constant jest.

"Well," he says at breakfast, "have you had your morning Turpo?"

"Never travel without it."

"What's it for," asks George, "the gizzard or the face?"

"The feet," says Bill.

"And the Kora Konia? I hope that it has not been neglected."

"Most certainly not," says Bill.

"*Houbigant pour le teint?*"

"Every night," says Bill.

"You'll be the death of me," George exclaims. "Did ever a man go on a walking trip so loaded down?"

"Lift the box," says Bill. "Not an ounce above two pounds. Handiest little thing in the world. Been to Europe with me eleven times."

"It will go in your coffin yet. What's the cork for?"

"A museum specimen," says Bill. "I come from a dry land."

"What do you do with the atomizer?"

"It's Listerine," says Bill. "It keeps germs out of my throat. Open your mouth!"

George obeys.

"Now, Beezer!"

Beezer obeys.

"Yours!"

"I'll be damned if I will," I answer.

We spent the evening at the Theater Royal where we saw a performance of the "Veterans of Variety, the Famous and Original, Previous to their World's Tour." Chief of them was Tom Costello who looked vaguely familiar as if I had seen him once at Poli's in New Haven in the days when George Felsburg was the orchestra. A Miss Marie Collins of the Collins family was famous for "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay." T. W. Barret was announced as "The One and Only. The Oldest Comedian on Any Stage." And there was a queen of burlesque who had frisked in the roaring nineties, of tired eyes now and drooping mouth when her silly act was done.

These stars blinked in a great constellation on chairs arranged in a circle, and before each act Costello made a speech in which he deplored the present sunk condition of the stage in its comparison to the better days that went before. Every one of his actors had been rescued from a shabby boarding house. Each one of them sang the song that had made him famous years before. During the early stages of the entertainment the oldest comedian alive had rested for an hour in complete detachment with chin buried in his collar and with now and then a dab at his rheumy eyes. Occasionally when an act was done he clapped his thumbs together to express approval and then sunk again to lethargy. When his turn came it was announced that "eighty frosty winters have not dulled old Barret's heart or legs"; and then he rose and performed in uncertain balance the last echo of a dance. The show

closed with a solo by Tom Costello, and all the others stood up and joined him in the chorus, "Comrades,

His actors had been rescued from a shabby boarding house

comrades, ever since we were boys," which he had made famous many years before.

If the audience showed no enthusiasm it was at

least respectful in a sodden sort of way, without the hootings that the performance deserved.

And this, I think, is a quality of English theater patrons. If ever a variety actor has entertained them, they will let him grow old and stiff upon their stage and will hold him lukewarm at least in their regard. A tradition is stronger than fresh appraisal. Like an aspidistra, though it be worn and dusty without a greener leaf, these old actors linger on in the recollection of their better days. The music halls of London are filled with performers who have lost their teeth and legs, yet their acts meet with applause and they still are headlined. A stranger will be perplexed by this and he will wonder how a wrinkled lady who sings coquettishly in fat tights can secure such an easy encore. And when at last the palaces of Leicester Square are closed against her, then she visits her artistic sins upon the provinces to the third and fourth generations of those who loved her.

When Tom Costello's chorus had been sung we mustered to great applause. I can only hope, in mercy to themselves, that these veterans of variety do not display themselves in America on their trip around the world.

As we came out of the theater a man in front of us fell down in a faint or fit, and the crowd held back so that he might be carried to the air.

"Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay was too much for him," said George.

"It was the old lady in pink tights," added Bill.

We were at some trouble to gain entrance to the

hotel. The door was locked and, after much ringing, a surly porter put his head out through the grill.

"The bar is closed," he said.

"We want no drink," said Bill. "We are a little band of peripatetic philosophers (the School of Socrates from the grove named Acdemus), traveling for our instruction. Here is a shilling which you may spend in riot."

"Cue," said the porter.

He admitted us, and we fell to bed.

A great clock that swings above the street

CHAPTER XXX

A LONG DAY IN WHICH I CLIMB LEITH HILL

AND now from Guildford our course lies east, parallel to the Pilgrims' Way until by Saturday we shall come to Canterbury where our trip will be accomplished.

I was up early to see Guildford Castle, but the others preferred an extra hour of sleep. The castle stands on

a little hill inside the town and is surrounded by a park that climbs the slope. No more than the Norman keep is left, and it is too crowded by houses for a sufficient view, too small to be of much consequence and beauty. It may have been once a temporary residence of royalty, for there was hunting all about, but it never stood assault and its annals are of meager interest. Castles and women! Their romance lies in the endurance of a siege. But as all castles have their gossip of violent days there is a legend that once in Saxon times, Alfred son of Ethelred landed in Kent with a company of Normans. This was taken as an act of insurrection to recover his father's crown, and he was captured, tortured and put to death in Guildford together with five hundred of his attendants.

Henry the Second made a royal park at Guildford and built a palace, but this is entirely swept away, although grain is supposed to show still a different color on the lines of its foundation. King John kept Christmas once at Guildford. All of the Edwards came and several Henrys. Elizabeth traveled hereabouts by coach until the county protested at the sum that her horses cost the district.

And Guildford is the scene of a novel by Martin Tupper—"Stephan Langton"—and I bought it later in a shop and tried to read it. I had thought of Tupper only as the author of "Proverbial Philosophy," which used to be bound in ooze leather and left forever on parlor tables all round Boston as a proof of culture.

It was about forty years ago that the castle grounds came into the possession of the city corporation and a

premium was offered for the best suggestion how a park might be made of it. One of these plans offered a hint that "the ugly ruin in the center" should be demolished and in place of it there should be erected "an iron band stand painted green, picked out with gold." Happily the offer was rejected.

Guildford was a usual halt of Mr. Pepys on his journeys of business down to Portsmouth. He records that in the garden of his inn he cut "sparagus for supper—the best that ever I ate. . . ." And again he remarks that in a bet he won a quart of sack "trying who could go best over the edge of an old fountain well" whatever that may mean. And Jane Austen who lived near by at Chawton sometimes shopped at Guildford. ". . . Very lucky in my gloves" she writes "—got them at the first shop I went to, though I went into it rather because it was near than because it looked like a shop, and gave only four shillings for them; after which everybody at Chawton will be hoping and predicting that they cannot be good for anything."

Anyone who has motored through Guildford has observed a great clock that swings from the Town Hall above the street. In sixteen eighty-three when the Hall was built a certain John Aylward, a clock maker, came to Guildford to engage in business. But the guild refused permission, so he set up his shop outside the borough where he built this clock. He presented it to the Corporation, which so sweetened its disposition that he was given the freedom of the town.

We were on the road by ten o'clock and struck south a mile or so to Shalford. It was here, if tradition is cor-

rect, that Bunyan located his Vanity Fair; for the Pilgrims' Way runs near the town and a great fair had been kept since the middle ages. It covered more than a hundred acres and its booths are supposed to have been placed in the meadows north of the town below St. Catherine's Chapel. It has been hinted that the Delectable Mountains were the rim of Sussex Downs, and that the Slough of Despond was the marshy land of Shalford Common. Anyway Bunyan lived for a time at Guildford and then in a cottage on the common. During this residence it seems likely that he wandered among the gaudy trading of the booths. "Then I saw in my Dream," he wrote, "that when they were got out of the Wilderness, they presently saw a Town before them, and the name of that Town is *Vanity;* and at the Town there is a Fair kept, called *Vanity Fair:* it is kept all the year long; it beareth the name of Vanity Fair, because the Town where 'tis kept *is lighter than Vanity;* and also because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither, is *Vanity.* As is the saying of the wise, *all that cometh is Vanity.*"

As we entered Shalford we passed the church and I saw the decayed remnant of the village stocks. And, as if the days of Bunyan were not wholly passed, I picked up from the pavement a leaflet of a revival urging all to come to God. But somewhat beyond the center of the town a tavern looked out across the common in shrewder invitation toward a fleshly life.

"Aha!" cried Bill, and he fumbled with the straps of his rucksack, "I find it in my heart to sit at stout that I may meditate upon the scene."

Open broken land stretched to the south marked by convenient paths and here I prefer to think the Fair was held. I cast about for the Slough of Despond and was rewarded by finding a marshy bit of ground close by the road. Certainly Christian, if he had not been lost in meditation, could have steered around it without disaster. Far off against the south arose the misty horizon of the Delectable Mountains. We argued whether in such a pious place it would be proper to apply at the tap and fall among thirsty sinners; but on inquiry we found we were out of hours and the bar was closed.

Beyond Shalford we saw St. Martha's Chapel on a hill, famous in pilgrim days. This chapel and St. Catherine's nearer Guildford were supposed to have been built by two sisters. They had only one hammer, but as magic was common in those days, first one sister drove a nail then hurled the hammer to the other who drove a nail. And so, turn and turn about they worked, tossing the hammer back and forth across the hill.

In four miles, near Albury where Martin Tupper wrote his "Stephan Langton," a novel of murder and many swoonings, we turned a few paces from the highroad to see the Silent Pool; for a dozen persons had warned us not to miss it. Its waters, so they said, lie so snugly in a wooded hollow that even in the wind its surface stays as glass.

In the very name there had sounded something of Keats—a silent pool where Endymion may once have slept, "full of sweet dreams, and health and quiet breathing"—where maidens came to bathe at dawn

and the creatures of the tempest paused to catch their image in the dark unruffled water. And so I hoped that there might be a lurking presence in the hollow—the shadow of pleasant ghosts that haunt a poet's dream. Have I not said that spirits dwell forever on the hills about Killarney and that their step is heard when a cloud falls upon the moon? The mountains that tower above a southern lake are the prison walls of a thousand years of song that pack the night with echoes. What quality resides in quiet waters that it contains these mild specters of the past? Eagerly we approached the Silent Pool.

"I don't see much in this," said Beezer, when we had pushed through a gate and stood beside the water.

For our fancy had run too high and as was inevitable the lake was a disappointment. In its state of nature it must have been of rare beauty. An upper pool runs off to one below, and both are set deeply in the trees which shield it from the storm. But a pavilion had been built with names scratched upon the planking and the paths were worn with picnics.

"Look!" said Bill, "There is a bottle lying at the bottom."

"Stout?" asked George.

"Bless my soul, it is. I think better of the spot," said Bill. "Its patrons are persons of good taste."

The pool's better days were lived before the char-à-banc soiled the highroads, and even now a band of restless tourists sought out an empty space of bark to carve their names.

We had lunch at Shere a mile to the east, a village

famed as one of the loveliest in Surrey. Its street is lined with thatched cottages, and the by-lane to the inn crosses a stream of swift and shallow current. Water of more tranquil temper would linger here in lodging for the night, for on its whole progress to the sea it will find no village of such pleasant ease.

It was at Shere that I demanded a change of diet. I had eaten so long cold beef and mutton for my lunch that I feared my speech would turn to a moo and bah. So I asked the waitress for four slices of dry toast—today's toast, not a stale remnant of yesterday—toast that did not harden in a cooler, but was folded in a napkin— and also a great saucer and a pitcher of hot milk. She gave me a shrewd look to see whether I were in my senses. In all the years that she had served no one had rejected their English beef. I met her eye with a stony glance and she yielded. Sir Toby in the play confessed that he was a great eater of meat, and if his carnal prowess showed in England he must have been a giant among the giants. George, meantime, stared at me in amazement.

"You don't mean to say that's all your lunch," he asked.

"It is," I answered.

"You'll be faint. There is no nourishment in it. Beef makes strength."

"And rheumatism," I added. "That's the trouble with England. Too much meat. Three times a day! Pounds of it!"

And I laid a bet with him that I would outlast him through the afternoon even if he swallowed a whole

cow, feet and ears and tail. I thought that he and the waitress winked together in agreement that a fool must have his way.

Shere is delightful. The inn sets back from the highroad on a quiet square. The hurrying motorist will see the thoroughfare only and he will signal to his driver to ease the speed, but it will be too late for a glimpse of stream. The houses rise from the sidewalk and each of them offers a window into clean snug living. There are gates everywhere suggestive of gardens, of kitchen walls for homely vegetables, of flowering shrubs and paths that end at the tinkle of the stream.

Not long since I lunched with two or three fellows of my own craft who meditated on the plots of novels. One of them had spent his winter in Lenox Library on Fifth Avenue compiling a book on old New York. And he was fed up—I quote his very slang to show how authors slump when out of hours—fed up with the noises of the city. Where, he asked, was there an English village in which one might rent a room for a month of summer—a spot with charming walks about, an inn near by for gossip after supper, a window where a table and an inkpot might be set with a tranquil view both up and down the street? And so for his purpose I now offer him this town of Shere.

And not Shere alone! Up the stream from Arundel, hard by Amberley Castle, he might pitch upon some thrifty widow with empty lodging whose windows glance upon a garden. Skiffs are moored by the river's grassy brink, and the ebb and flow of tide will ease his

progress up or down. He may float even with the current until the turning of the water bears him home.

I now offer him this town of Shere

He may sit with a pad upon his knee on the stone seats of Amberley Castle where sheep nibble at the turf, and

here if anywhere his pen will change from prose to a flight of rhyme.

"When I write my novel," said Bill, "I'll take a sunny room at the Mermaid Inn at Rye—the room that holds the legend of Elizabeth, although the four-post bed will be too short and I'll bargain for a longer couch. I'll moon around the streets and pry out the old corners of antiquity, or sit for an hour of twilight on the esplanade and look for the winking lights of France."

"If you see the lights of France" said George, "it will be a damned clear night."

"When I write my novel," Bill replied, "it will be a damned foggy night."

"Bill, you'll be the death of me," said George, and in his laughter he jounced like a man who rides a trotting horse.

"At Bodiam," Bill continued, "I'll write a play of Pomfret-Dawken, with a great climax in which the Duchess stuffs her through the battlement."

"With a splash of real water?" asked Beezer.

"It shall be arranged," said Bill.

Or, if an author follows the advice of Hilaire Belloc, he will choose a village in a fold of the South Downs and, when his work is done, he will seek the wind upon the hills to blow the cobwebs from his mind. But he will be wisest if he scorns precise advice and centers at any town of Surrey, Sussex or southern Kent, and walks here and there for discovery of his own; for what we find ourselves is always sweetest.

We left Shere shortly after lunch and, by the middle

of the afternoon, we were fatigued and sat for rest beside the road to the west of Wotton. Dorking was our objective for the night and it was another hour of walking. But here a road branched south on a great circle to the top of Leith Hill—an extra distance of seven miles. I asked George whether his slab of beef would endure so far. He smiled wanly at this onslaught of my milk and toast. Nor did Bill or Beezer jump to the added task. So I left them by the roadside and went alone. All day we had been upon a highroad with its roar of frequent motors, but this was a quieter way beyond the noise.

Once I overtook a group of Englishmen with packs upon their shoulders. They too were bound for Leith Hill and were lost without a map, so I lent them mine for study. They were cockney and went with a rheumatic dawdle that I left behind. A cyclist, next, had missed a corner road, and I set him right. Presently a fine mist fell and I hoisted my umbrella and strode uphill. It was now rough country of pine and open gorse and heather; and this is the charm of England, for the soft verdure of the valleys yields its kingdom to the harsh rule of wind on the upper slopes. It seems as if nature, knowing the island's cramped dimensions, had packed variety as close as possible.

Or shall we say that England is a shop of many samples to be sold at retail, never in vast bulk—a bit of valley, a dainty box of hills—all displayed on nearby shelves? Can one who journeys on the Devon moors believe that the softer lines of Somerest are near? One puts on his boots in a meadow by the Thames to

come at twilight to the rugged Cotswolds. America is a warehouse with long corridors to traverse, but England lays her varied scene upon a single counter.

To gain the summit of Leith Hill one must leave the road, and hereabouts there were so many paths that I had to select one at random. And for an hour I went here and there through woods and common, searching for the tower that I had seen from Blackdown. When at last I found it I bought an apple of an old woman and sat down hard to rest. She was a wrinkled little woman and the apple was wrinkled also, as if the two were cousins. Much is sung of the loveliness of English apple blossoms in the spring, but the trees exhaust their effort in decoration.

Leith Hill is the highest point in southeastern England and its panorama reaches to the coast, with a glimpse of Channel at a breaking of the Downs. Off to the west I saw Blackdown, and I waved my hand to my former self who had stood there on Sunday morning.

I did not climb the tower but, as I looked up, I saw a group of young men and women leaning on the rail far above my head. The lips of one young man were puckered as if he were about to spit—for on a tower this is temptation even to the cultured—so I moved to safety. It is said that from this tower on the clearest of all possible days forty-one spires of London churches were counted once, and that Bucks and Wiltshire could be seen. But usually England draws upon itself a lacy covering of mist and one is fortunate for even a glimpse of sea. And it is the softer lines of nearer hills that are

the lovelier view. For if miles shall count alone, it is best to gaze only at the stars.

I came down from Leith Hill by following a trail of telephone poles, and this brought me to the road at the village of Cold Harbor. It is, of course, far inland, but the English do not care for logic in these matters. A down is an upland. A dyke is a channel. Here again at Cold Harbor I think that a novelist might be at rest. It seems to be a village that went on journey to the sea but lost its road in the tangle of the upland. I marked a very window for the tired fellow who plods in Lenox Library.

And then presently I overtook a small boy who carried a basket of berries which he had picked along the hedges. He was streaked to the ears, like a nursery giant who had gobbled up a hero. This young man was a collector of cigarette pictures and he inquired if I would look through my pockets on the chance of finding one.

"And which are the best?" I asked.

"Regiments in uniform," he answered. "There are eighty in the set and I have them all."

He lived in Dorking and, when I told him that I had traveled from America, he asked me whether I lived in Atlantic City, which he knew from motion pictures. At the outskirts of Dorking I fetched him out a sixpence.

"Cue," he said, and he scampered off to spend it.

Twenty-two miles this day! I found my fellow-travelers at the White Horse Inn.

Sitting at rum and tea by the taproom fire

CHAPTER XXXI

A DIGRESSION ON "THE PICKWICK PAPERS"

THE White Horse Inn boasts of the patronage of Charles Dickens but in a pamphlet which I found upon the table it denies hotly that it is the Marquis o' Granby. And yet the Marquis o' Granby Tavern has made Dorking famous and tourists poke about the streets in vain search of it.

But perhaps, gentlest of readers, you have forgotten that once upon a time Sam Weller begged a holiday of Mr. Pickwick that he might journey out of London to pay his filial respects to the old 'un and his amiable

stepmother. And here let me remark that Dickens always called her mother-in-law, which is after all an innocent mistake and does not entirely condemn the book. It is recorded that Sam, alighting from his coach, stopped in front of "a road-side public-house of the better class—just large enough to be convenient, and small enough to be snug" where a signboard was painted to form "an expressive and undoubted likeness of the Marquis of Granby of glorious memory."

And now you may recall that when he entered he found Mrs. Weller senior and the Reverend Mr. Stiggins sitting at rum and tea by the taproom fire. When he had been admitted to the hearth, they discussed the noble society which provided the infant negroes in the West Indias "with flannel waistcoats and moral pocket handkerchiefs."

"'What's a moral pocket ankercher?' said Sam; 'I never see one o' them articles o' furniter.'"

"'Those which combine amusement with instruction, my young friend,' replied Mr. Stiggins: 'Blending select tales with wood-cuts.'"

And at this, so we are told, Mr. Stiggins turned his eyes toward heaven and buried his pious face within his jug.

And here to Dorking came Sam again to attend his stepmother's funeral. "My dear Sammle," his father had written, "I am very sorry to have the pleasure of bein a Bear of ill news your Mother in law cort cold consekens of imprudently settin too long on the damp grass in the rain a hearin of a shepherd who warnt able to leave off till late at night owen to his havin vound his-self up with brandy and vater. . . ."

So Sam sat with his father in the tap when the rites

were done, discoursing on the ways of women, particularly of widows, when the Reverend Mr. Stiggins entered to inquire whether the will had been read.

"'Nothing for *me*, Mr. Samuel?'

"Sam shook his head.

"'I think there's something,' said Mr. Stiggins, turning as pale as he could turn. 'Consider, Mr. Samuel; no little token?'

"'Not so much as the vorth o' that old umbrella o' yourn,' replied Sam.

"'Perhaps,' said Mr. Stiggins, hesitatingly, after a few moments' deep thought, 'perhaps she recommended me to the care of the man of wrath, Mr. Samuel?'"

At this the elder Mr. Weller rose, took the Reverend Mr. Stiggins by his trousers slack and boosted him across the tap.

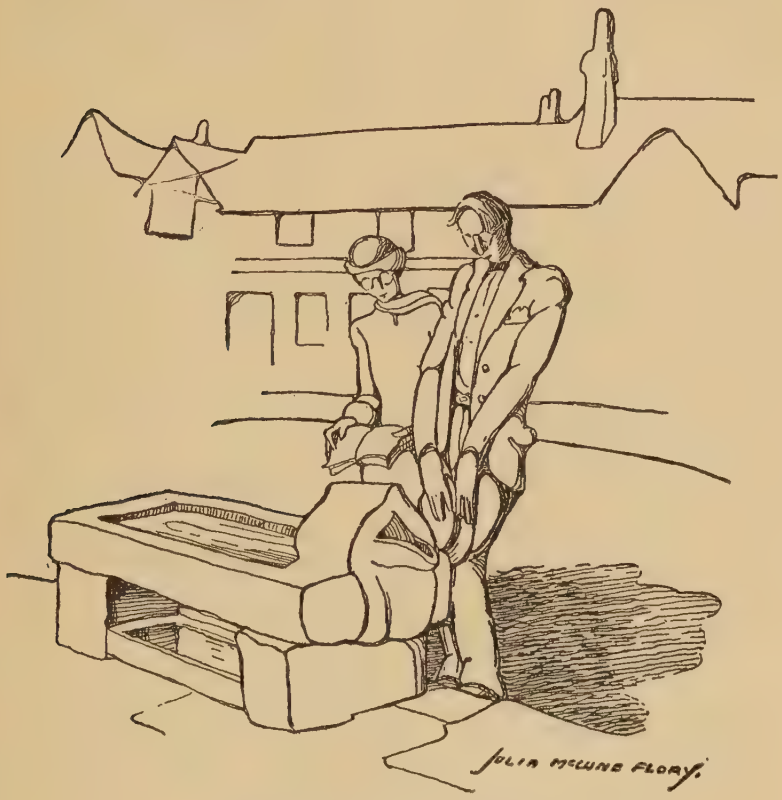
"'Sammy,' said Mr. Weller, 'put my hat on tight for me.'"

So assisted, he kicked him across the sidewalk and ducked him in the water-trough until the fire in the Shepherd's nose was out.

Since that day tourists walk the streets of Dorking and whenever they come upon a horse-trough they stop and stand in meditation. Any butcher hard by is asked a frequent question whether this is the spot where Mr. Stiggins blew hot bubbles to the surface.

Few books are perused so diligently as "The Pickwick Papers." If you are not of the elect you have not read it, or you have read it only once many years ago. But there is a company of men—for women are excluded by their deficiency of humor—who go through it once a

year all their lives. And these men know every chapter and every paragraph in their order. You have but to start a sentence and they can piece it to the end. "Of



They stop and stand in meditation

this man Pickwick" you begin. And pat the answer comes: "I will say little; the subject presents but few attractions." In the far-off corners of the English world men of strange outlandish life will bid you on a challenge to "put it down a wee."

"I propose a club," said Bill, who was fierce with ardor, "a club to which no one under forty shall be admitted. It shall be a requirement of entrance that applicants shall cap such sentences as are put to them at random, together with an affidavit that they have gone roundabout twenty-five times from start to finish."

It will be found that such a company—although this will be no part of necessary ritual—will look at least with a tolerant eye on Tom Jones and Rabelais, and that they have accepted Falstaff as their brother.

But if one desires an exalted office in the order it will be required that he shall have been to Ipswich to see the room where Mr. Pickwick met the lady in yellow curl-papers, that he shall have taken lodging in Bath and run at midnight, like Mr. Dowler, around the Crescent, that he shall have explored East Anglia to find which town is Eatonswill, that he shall have wandered in the Kent Hills to speculate upon the site of Manor Farm together with the pond where Mr. Pickwick skated, the rookery where Tracy Tupman was shot in the arm and cried out the name of Rachael, together with all the comic appurtenance that followed on their love.

"Must he not," asked Bill, "have been to the Bull Inn at Rochester where Alfred Jingle borrowed Winkle's clothes for a proper dancing dress?"

And so the rules are set, and a committee appointed to scrutinize admission.

But if the White Horse Inn is not the Marquis o' Granby it is at least an inn of a better sort with a coach yard of covered entrance, rooms and corridors that

ramble in the dark with steps up and down for easy suicide. Dorking stands at the intersection of two main roads—one north and south, and the other the highway from London to Canterbury and Dover; for we are now on the Dover Road, famous for elopements and other illicit flights to France. The White Horse is one of the well-known inns of England, and artists go there and sketch their lodgings. I cannot learn the route where the elder Mr. Weller drove on "the very amicablest terms with eighty mile o' females," but it is fitting that he lived at Dorking at the crossing of the ways. The town has a busy high street and doubtless it is the market for the small shopping of a wide countryside.

In the evening we went to a movie and saw once more Baby Peggy, the young lady who endangered India as we had been told in Rye.

"If I see that youngster again," said Bill, "I'll screech."

And out we came.

Knole House

CHAPTER XXXII

TO KNOLE

ALL morning we followed a dull broad road through lovely country to Reigate, where we ate lunch at the White Hart and rested in a flowering garden. Then we tramped through Redhill, which is a great suburban town of the better sort. Each crossroad now marked the distance up to London, and the close spacing of the towns showed our nearness to the city. On a long hill the others so talked and dawdled that I strode ahead and came to Bletchingly where I waited for an hour on a tavern step beside the road. Here Bill and George took to a bus, and Beezer and I went on afoot.

And so, through Godstone to Westerham. This had been the lodging of our first day's tramp and a great circle was completed. We were greeted as old friends—as travelers who came home from around the

world. General Wolfe still stood on the green with uplifted sword. In the parlor of the King's Arms there is a grand piano of better days and George played to us. There was much of Chopin and, although one or two keys produced no result, the excellent concert lifted windows along the street.

Time that jogs at the starting of a holiday runs swiftly as it nears an end. The long full days are those of first impression when the mind is fresh. But as a trip advances the pockets of the brain grow stuffed and refuse all extra luggage, and it is when the perception dulls that the hours hurry through the day. This is the common experience of all travelers. Let a man come to a strange country (let him break from any routine) and his first day seems a crowded week. It is not the clock that is the true marker of the time, but rather the frequency of message to the mind. And this truth holds not only for a journey but for all of life. If a man would live long, even if his span of years be cut, he must keep his brain alert with new experiment of thought, and each day thereby is stretched until it becomes a vivid week. It is because of this that childhood seems so long, for all the world is fresh and every minute brings experience.

And now on our walk in southern England our senses have grown dull with a month of travel and my narrative must hurry to the pace of shorter days.

Next morning we tramped to a crossroad beyond Brasted where we struck over Ide Hill. The valley that lay below us to the north is the course of the Pilgrims' Way. We were caught by showers in a

tavern at the top, where we played at throwing little arrows at a target. Many of the bars hereabouts in Kent have this game for patrons to waste a pleasant hour. And then the sky cleared and we went by narrow roads and lanes through wooded country, until by noon we came to Sevenoaks. All the hills were softened into mist, and it seemed that nature aped a canvas of Corot.

I recall how once we stood sheltered by a tree from rain, and how Bill and George discussed the ways of women—old bachelors without a scar. Beezer was silent, and I thought his memory roved to a school dance in query whether these traits marked also the golden creature who came at his invitation.

We lunched at the Royal Oak which is opposite the entrance of Knole Park. The food was excellent, the inn was so snug and clean, the garden was so set with flowers, that we at once bargained for rooms and spread our litter on the chairs. And here we spent the afternoon in Knole House and under the trees of its lordly park. House and Park are so beautiful, so filled with memories of spacious English life, that they alone would be sufficient warrant for our two hundred and fifty miles of road.

It would be a weary task to trace the history of Knole, and if I cribbed from deeper authors their paragraphs of names and dates we would both forget them at the turning of the chapter. For the stage of the world grows old and its hundred dramas flourish briefly. A king lays the ermine on his shoulders and takes his gilded truncheon from its shelf of ancient properties. He meets his cue and struts beneath the lights.

Schemes are whispered, or a tale of love prospers in the moon. But Time stands on the bridge with finger at the switch to dim the lights to a sober end.

Knole Manor dates to the reign of John, but it was in fourteen fifty-seven that Thomas Bourchier bought the property and "built a faire House." Bourchier had been successively bishop of Worcester, Ely and finally of Canterbury, and it was at his peak of power that he erected a house at Knole to fit his lofty station. Many of these early buildings are still left. Bourchier willed Knole to his successors in the See of Canterbury. Archbishop Morton lived here, and in his household was a young man named More who was to be famous for his Utopia. Here Christmas was kept in fourteen ninety-two, and one wonders if in the merriment any gossip mingled of new lands just discovered beyond the sea. And Warham was next when Time had done his office. And then Cranmer owned it, who presently yielded it to Henry Eighth. And so it went to Northumberland, then to Cardinal Pole and finally in the reign of Elizabeth to the Sackville family.

Thomas Sackville, first Earl of Dorset, came into possession in the year sixteen hundred and three, and it was he who built the general range of Tudor buildings that are today its chief and apparent beauty. Sackville was Lord High Steward and Lord Treasurer and his contemporaries knew him as a statesman, but his poems although little read have outlived his political fame. And Knole is still the property of the Sackville family. We shall see presently the treasure chest that the first Earl of Dorset carried with him on his travels.

Knole House is now mostly a museum. You enter through a great hall where more than a hundred servants once sat below the salt. I asked the little woman who showed us through how many servants were now employed indoors, and she answered eight—for times have fallen out of joint, and the long corridors and processions of rooms are held open now only for the trotting of the tourists. The present family live modestly in a wing and their private rooms are not shown.

"It seems to me" Bill interrupted, "that when a gentleman is good enough to show his house to strangers it is a bit impertinent to ask the number of his servants. Inquire" he added, "whether they keep a Ford!"

"Madam" I said, "perhaps you can tell me whether the family keeps——"

"Hush!" said Bill.

Most of these English country places are open to the public on certain days when the family is not in residence, and their owners look upon themselves as no more than the brief tenant of a national possession. It is only when an American secures the lease that the gates are shut to tourists.

The little woman informed us that there are three hundred and sixty-five rooms in Knole, fifty-two staircases, twelve or seven courts, I forget which. I hope that somewhere was an uncounted hall-bedroom for a leap year.

Only a catalogue could recite the treasure—furniture and paintings, tapestries and screens, faded satin beds, carved wood and crystal chandeliers. Here is a gift

from the King of Spain, an ivory cabinet from China, a four-post bed newly gilded for Elizabeth—hundreds of these souvenirs that show how life at Knole was

"Inquire" he added, "whether they keep a Ford!"

intimate with the power of all the world. Each room has lodged a king or cardinal, each corridor has known a mighty soldier, each nook a poet. For five hundred years this has been the home of men who built a king-

dom and laid the foundations of an empire. It is a book of history that opens everywhere at a colored page to illustrate the plot of government.

Bill was much engaged by a long glass tube, in diameter halfway between a thumb and wrist.

"What's that for?" he asked.

"It held a yard of beer," our guide answered, "and a man was supposed to drink it in one breath."

"My sainted grandmother!" said Bill. "And what if his wind gave out?"

"The attendants" she replied, "held the tube tilted upward from the lips, and any part he couldn't master in a breath overflowed his chin and collar. It was used at banquets to test the valor of a man."

"My soul!" said Bill. "No wonder that Sir Toby swore his old clothes were good enough to drink in."

A moist far-off look settled in his eyes. "I should like" he said at length, "to try it out with stout."

There was silence for a moment. "What do you suppose" he asked, "Queen Elizabeth drank at breakfast? Tea, of course, had not come in."

"Beer," replied our guide. "Beer for breakfast."

"The horrid old lady," answered Bill.

We moved forward to other treasures.

In an anteroom a cloth was spread upon a great table, quite covered over with drying rose leaves. This is a tradition of Knole, and for hundreds of years roses have been grown, gathered, dried and mixed with spices on an ancient formula to fill the fragrant vases and to be folded in the linen.

Then on again.

And as the cicerone drones her tale and lifts a finger to mark a portrait, the tourists press forward against

One sees a pageant rising out of shadow

the rope and squint for a closer view. Then a door is closed and another opened. The procession moves

forward along the corridor, like those other companies who have successively sat in velvet before these fires, dreamed of their advancement and given place to those who followed them.

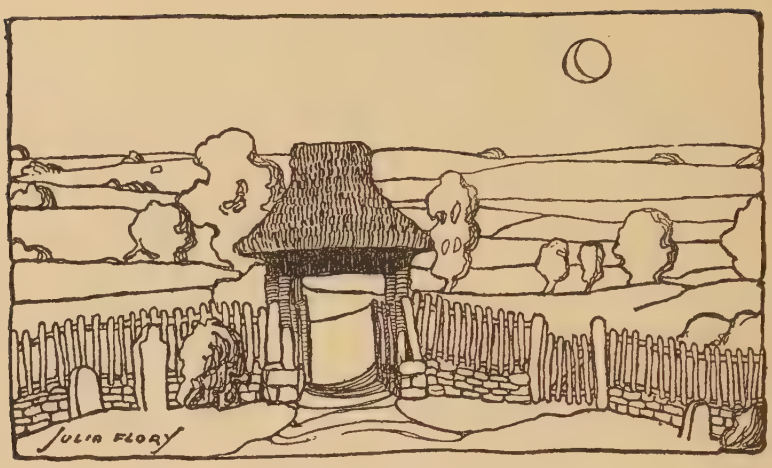
Facts are but brick and mortar, it is the fancy that paints the decoration. Through half-shut eyes one sees a pageant rising out of shadow—priests with the miter of a bishop, cardinals in scarlet cloak, sailors from around the world, a poet mumbling at his rhyme, a queen who walks to a blare of trumpets. In the turning of a century the procession falls to powdered wigs and silver buckles, and now sinks at last to sober wool. There is a long tread of undistinguished feet, and with open eyes we look upon a band of dusty tourists. We are the ragtag—the children, as it were, who have run from school to follow a gay parade.

We sent off post cards from Knole, with pretense that here we were entertained for a week-end. "The left wing is ours," we wrote, "and each morning we pick strawberries in the garden and eat them with rich cream. His Grace is the soul of hospitality and spares no pains to make us feel at home. H. R. H. is expected down tomorrow, and it will be great fun to unbend with him. Love to aunty!"

George went back to London by the afternoon train despite our protest, for we had hoped he would walk with us to Canterbury. Seldom have I met a man of such a pleasant temper for a holiday, with magic in his fingers if any piano is about. In the chapel at Knole

there stood an ancient organ, now abandoned, and we had urged him to try its keys; but it answered only with a squeak.

Bill, Beezer and I spent the evening at the pictures—Tom Meighan in Alaska. And so through silver streets in a night of moon and stars to our beds at the Royal Oak.



A ghost might look far across the Weald

CHAPTER XXXIII

WE DRAW NEAR THE END

OF this morning's walk, Friday, August the seventh, I recall a church at Seal in a graveyard on a hill where at midnight a ghost might look far across the Weald. And I recollect the Crown Point Inn further on the road, which commemorates Sir Jeffery Amherst who served with Wolfe in America. Crown Point stands above the Hudson and I have passed it many times running into New York. Bill pronounced the beer to be the best of all the trip and with his usual generosity he treated all the room. Its particular brand was called barley wine, and it has the strength (a hint for pilgrims) of the days before the war.

It was here we were told of a camp above the road

near Ightham where, in its heap of rubbish, an antiquarian named Ben Harrison, famous hereabouts, had dug implements of the stone age. Presently we inquired the location of this camp from a man working in the fields. He was a gardener, once in Harrison's employment, and he had caught his master's zeal for digging in the camp. He led us to his cottage where he had displayed his discoveries on shelves in his sitting room—all manner of stone implements, chipped or smoothed, which had been used by men of the neolithic age.

"And when was that?" asked Bill.

The antiquarian shrugged his shoulders. "Thousands of years ago," he answered. "Too many centuries to count."

As he explained the implements his little daughter ran about the room, and our interest was divided between the present and the past. But he so warmed to our enthusiasm that he gave us each a stone for souvenir. Mine was a kind of rudimentary spoon which I shall find useful for mustard. And these were fashioned when Noah had not yet cut his gopher wood, when men lived in caves scooped from the facing of the hill, beneath which motors now hurry to the coast for the riot of the week-end.

Our friend would take no payment, and here I repeat my thanks for his generous courtesy to three travelers who climbed his wall. The camp, at the top of the path leading from the cottage, was but a shallow pit scratched through the surface soil, as if excavations had been dug for the foundations of a house and then had

been abandoned. I poked with my umbrella at the broken stones but no treasure yielded to my search.

And there was this day an old man who sat with us on a bench beside the road. He had walked since dawn from Gravesend and his toes were coming through his boots; but he made no attempt to get money from us. Perhaps he thought that we were equal brothers to his poverty.

I recall, also, a watering trough with a canopy of wood and this inscription cut in stone.

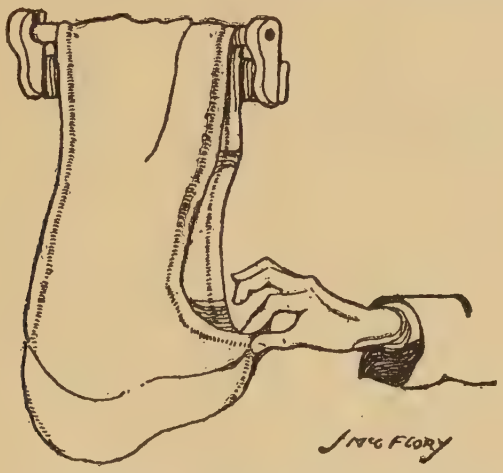
> Friend, who art here athirst to drink
> Of earthly water, stay to think
> As the stream runs, of that kind flow
> With which all things we want below
> Are ever pouring to us from above,
> A life-long river fed by love.
> Then as thou leavest go to tell
> Some care-worn dweller around this well
> How souls may find a font to slake
> Their thirst, and life less dreary make.
> So may this water be a guide
> To yonder church where fuller tide
> Of peace be thine, till, thirst is o'er
> With bliss by the eternal shore.

But now the pious metaphor breaks down, for the stream is choked and the trough is empty.

We lunched at Ightham at the George and Dragon; and in the washroom there hung a request that each person leave a penny for the use of the towel. There was a shrewd profit in the business, for the towel must

already have gathered thirty or forty shillings and still went strong.

At West Malling we came upon a Norman gate that guarded the grassy inclosure of what we thought were monastic buildings. We stepped inside and were



Must already have gathered thirty or forty shillings

advancing toward a fine old Tudor building when there came toward us on the gravel path a fluttering nun or mother superior, something like that.

"You have made a mistake," she said with a pleasant smile but with arm uplifted that seemed to hold a flaming sword.

"So it appears," I answered. "We were looking for monks—the other kind of nun."

"Men are not allowed in this inclosure," she continued.

"But the gate was so inviting. Where are we anyway?" asked Bill.

"It is a Benedictine convent—for women."

"Our fault," said Bill. "But what a charming garden! One would say those tables were laid for tea."

"I am sorry," said the M. S.

"Our sorrow is greater," answered Bill.

We turned away.

"I suppose" said Bill, "that rules are rules. But I would have liked to invite all the nuns to a pint of stout. I'll bet the old girls would have enjoyed it, too."

And so we journeyed to Maidstone and put up at the Royal Star Hotel. In our rooms there was water that ran both hot and cold which is a novelty in England. As Maidstone is a city, the hotel's cleanliness was doubtful; for our advance to population usually gathers its bit of dirt. Certainly the waiter's shirt showed the contest of a furious week.

We have walked where clouds ran joyous from the sea

CHAPTER XXXIV

THREE TRAMPS IN SOUTHERN ENGLAND

I DRAW near the end of our month of travel. At Maidstone my pedometer showed a distance of two hundred and seventy miles and by the following night, when our journey ended, it touched three hundred. This distance excluded all lifts by bus and boat, but included detour and evening stroll.

We have had a glimpse of Kent, Sussex and Surrey; but no more than a glimpse, for every crossroad was an invitation which by necessity we declined. Each valley offered us the spires of villages unvisited, a transient vista through the trees which beckoned vainly.

We have traversed valley and hill. We have been lost within the tangle of a wood, have trod the yielding turf of stately parks. We have climbed through gorse

and heather to noble prospects on the summits of the Downs. We have gone by highroad, by lane and path, sometimes with a rush of motors at our side, but more often with wind singing in the trees. In sunlight we have walked where clouds ran joyous from the sea, and we have been drenched in rain till we dripped like a leaky tap.

On our march we have found rest in roadside taverns and on benches by the way. We have perched on the parapet of bridges and watched the leaves drifting with the stream. On hillsides we have slept, or through half-shut eyes we have watched the wind change its semaphore to the brisk traffic of the clouds. We have climbed an ancient battlement and have made a pillow of our bags for a brief refreshment to conjure up the creatures of the past. In village churches we have sat with glance that has wandered to the vaults and windows. And in friendly graveyards we have found a bed for a short siesta with heads upon a mound of turf. Stream and pond, crumbling wall and meadow, have been the companions of our ease until the road has called us onward to the smoke of supper.

We have slept at night in about twenty inns. In three times that number we have sat in the taprooms in conversation with such persons as we found—laborers, servants and small merchants. These inns, with but an exception or two, have been clean and sufficient for our entertainment. A musty smell we found, but this is but an agreeable proof of their antiquity. If one accepts the English standard of mutton and monotony, the food was worth the eating. Usually

there was a garden at the rear, fair with flowers, where we could watch the stars and recount the adventures of the day. Beds were often of a tumbled sort, as if they played apprentice to the rolling hills. They were nests, but of clean comfort when the legs were tired.

There were no private baths, of course, but a tub stood handy off a corridor. If there was no key upon the door, one could sing and guard himself. The inns were divided between electric lights and candles, and there was a touch of homely life to choose a taper from the hall below and cast long shadows on the stairway. Usually there was no running water in the rooms, but the door was rapped at eight o'clock and on rising a jug of hot water was discovered in the hall. Some of my proud acquaintance might be inclined to sniff at the more primitive of these inns, but the fault would be their gilded standard trained by empty motor travel. When the legs are tired, they judge in charity. A man of simple tastes can go anywhere in southeast England and find in nearly every town or village a room to his comfort and advantage.

We met no mishap of any kind. For a day or two Bill's shoes pinched his feet and he limped. Once he sat upon a thistle, but the puncture reached no vital part. We were drenched, but found comfort out of Scotland. And this was all. Beezer added fifteen pounds to his lanky skeleton. I took off ten which, *sans* calories, I shall not acquire again.

We met courtesy everywhere. We never asked a question that did not elicit more than a civil answer. Heads were craned from windows to point a right

direction. Children, through the whole range of their intelligence or stupidity, never failed us. Waitresses trotted fast to fill our needs. No landlady was short with us or raked us through her spectacles. There was, it is true, a surly porter at Guildford but I think that beef sat too heavy on his digestion. England is a land of good manners and to any but a grumbling traveler deference and courtesy is shown. Even the small officials—door-men, ticket-takers and traffic policemen—regard themselves as public servants and they perform their duties with civility. They dispense information not as if the inquirer were a fool and they lordly creatures far above with charter straight from God. Too many servants of similar station in America hold the public as a butt for the awkward shafts of their ill-nature.

We found that fifteen miles was a fair average for a day. This distance can be managed in five hours with here and there a rest. A stalwart leg can easily double the distance, but with the greater length of road the attention has not time to wander and one keeps his head too much upon the pavement. Even a short detour is then a burden that brings one late to supper, and the soul of the expedition is lost in haste. One day, the last, I walked thirty miles and by diligence I came to my destination by five o'clock without an early start, but I might as well for all I saw have jounced the journey in a motor. Through sheer monotony of travel my head was more weary than my legs.

The advantage of southeastern England for a walking trip is the variety of hill and valley, coast and hinter-

land, marsh and meadow. No other countryside of England offers more lovely villages or a better average of inns. It is moderately free of cities, and these are no larger than market towns without a monotony of dreary suburbs. It is a country of dwellings, rather than of factories or mines. Its towns lie close together so that a tramp can end when fatigue arises. Although it lacks the broken coast, the moors and the freer hills of Cornwall, the open stretches of the north, it has a quiet beauty unparalleled. Its very snugness of narrow acres commends it to a stranger from a thriftless country where land is too cheap to gain a proper love. An Englishman, if he walks at home, will choose Scotland or the hills of Yorkshire, but he does this for their contrast to the south. Except on the great roads through this southeast district to the Channel there are few American motorists, for the distances are too short for their hurrying day.

But there is some slight disadvantage in its proximity to London. On a holiday or at a week-end there is a chance that an inn may be full. And yet a slight ingenuity escapes the highroad and on secondary lanes there are always beds. In England noisy pleasure seeks no more than a narrow groove. And, as at Hindhead, one can sit alone above the tumult and meditate in sourly pleasant fashion on the weakness of mankind when it goes upon a holiday.

In order that I might know the exact cost of our trip I counted my money when I climbed aboard the bus in London, and again when we were done. My total expenditure was the equivalent of six dollars a day.

If we had been content with a second choice of inn or had asked for cheaper rooms, if we had foregone the purchase of postal cards and trivial souvenirs, if we had traveled on bare necessity without theater or bus, the amount of our outlay would have been cut to four dollars to the person. As far as we could judge no one overcharged us. Evidently we paid the price that would have been asked the native. There was no need to dicker, nor were we thrust into quarters other than the best.

From such folk as we met in taverns and along the road I would hazard a guess that this countryside is of conservative temper in politics. These villages have still a touch of feudal dependence on a manor house, and the cottage takes its opinions from the hall. Once we heard a socialist harangue a crowd but he moved them not by the thickness of a penny. His speech was no more than an evening entertainment without payment at the door; and his audience stood about, sucking at their pipes, with hands thrust deep within their pockets.

And yet these same folk were disconsolate toward the future and they thought that the Empire drifted to the rocks, that the prosperity of England cannot return, that high taxes, unemployment, foreign competition and the inertia that thrives upon the dole will be their wreck. Most of the younger persons looked for a chance to get to Canada to labor in the grainfields of the west. And this seemed not an empty pessimism, for these folk were of pleasant humor and were ready enough to jest.

An excellent map is needed, and I found a reprint of the ordnance survey on a scale of a mile to the inch. This shows even pathways across the hills and a dot for every farmhouse. They are accurate beyond any map of ours. With such a map hunger can space a road

Its suggestion of spacious days

to lunch or set a destination without the outlay of too long a day.

If I might choose favorite towns, where most of them are beautiful, I would select Rye for its Mermaid Inn, its steep streets, its range of antique houses, sky-blue doors where artists work, its esplanade where one can watch the ships upon the Channel. I would name Arundel for its park, its poetic lake, the towers that show above the trees. Midhurst might gain my

suffrage for the mighty oaks above the golf course of its park, for the tangle of deep woods and the forgotten avenue where once a princess slept. And Shere wins a vote for its ease, its thatched roofs, its retirement from the highroad. Nor may Sevenoaks go unpraised for the glories of Knole, its suggestion of spacious days, its inn and the garden of flowering hedge. I could spend a week at Bodiam and waste my idle mornings by the lake watching the slow curl of water among the lily pads. And there are villages in the valleys of the Downs which I would wish to see again, to pass my days upon the windy hills where cows and sheep pursue their eternal dinner. Penshurst and Chiddingstone, Pevensey and Haslemere. . . .

"And what will you call this book you write?" asked Bill.

"That is the difficulty," I replied.

Whereupon I went alone and tried twenty titles to learn if one would fit. I returned without decision.

"What" said Bill, "have you selected?"

"Pilgrims to Canterbury. Would that do?" I asked.

"It is a theft," he answered.

"A Path of English Villages," I tried again.

"It is too much like a title you have used before."

"And so it is," I answered.

"How would it do" asked Beezer, "to name it A Journey Among the Bacon Eaters?"

"Not at all," I replied.

"Sore Feet in England?" he persisted.

"Might I not call the book" I asked, "The Storage of October?"

"What does it mean?"

"It means that in autumn I shall draw upon my memory to write it."

"But will anyone, before he makes his purchase, know what the title is about?" asked Bill.

"Probably not," I answered. "If only the youngster were a child, it would be so easy. I would call a girl Katharine; a boy Richard, so that he might be nicknamed Dick."

There was silence, then a flash crossed Bill's face.

"What is it?" I asked.

"I have it," he cried. "Three Tramps in Southern England."

"I hoped you might do better," I replied. "There is something dirty about a tramp. I must think again."

From this we fell to a discussion of the names of books, and of their authors' shrewdness or stupidity in the christening of them. Musicians have the better of it, for they put merely a number to their opus.

She stood there always like a horse inside a stall

CHAPTER XXXV

A CANTERBURY PILGRIM

AS befits a pilgrim I was up at an early hour. I packed on tiptoe. I stole to the door. A dim knowledge of my departure was recorded in Beezer's grunts, but he did not waken.

Save for those who slept, the hotel was empty. The landlady was not yet behind her wicket, although I had thought she stood there always like a horse inside a stall. My footsteps echoed in the deserted rooms. The old gentleman in the furious shirt who had served our dinner was not yet abroad. At first I was deluded with the hope that the cook might be waddling by her stove and that she might stir me up a cup of coffee. I pushed open the kitchen's swinging door and was greeted by a pile of unscraped dishes. Soapy pan and rag had not

held her to a task last night when Tommy Meighan played.

What should a pilgrim do? Rouse the house to demand a breakfast? Surely the Wife of Bath would not have started lean upon a journey. No woman who has had five husbands and wears scarlet stockings on a mule would be content to travel on an empty stomach. The Franklin, too, it is recorded, loved at morning his sop of wine. Such taste proves an easy breakfast and a tardy start. Yet the Pardoner is written as a man of gentle temper and he, at least, must often have journeyed light. So him I made my pattern and, tightening my belt, I set upon my way.

I had arranged with Beezer to pay for my lodging, yet I seemed a thief as I tiptoed through the lobby to the street.

Housewives, as I went, were dusting at their windows or striking a mop upon the sill. A grocer took down his wooden shutters to show the trade his shriveled apples. A butcher hung out a leg of mutton. At the top of the street a signpost informed me that Canterbury was distant twenty-eight miles.

In a half hour I had left the last houses of the city, and here I saw a woman sweeping the whitened steps of a roadside tavern. These steps get a strict attention even from slovens who permit a litter in the tap. A smoke rose from the chimney with hint of eggs and bacon, so I advanced to tell my plight. She was cordial to the thought, so I went inside. And while the necessary clutter engaged the stove I sat in the disordered bar. Then I took to the road again, singing the kind of tune that a contented cargo knows.

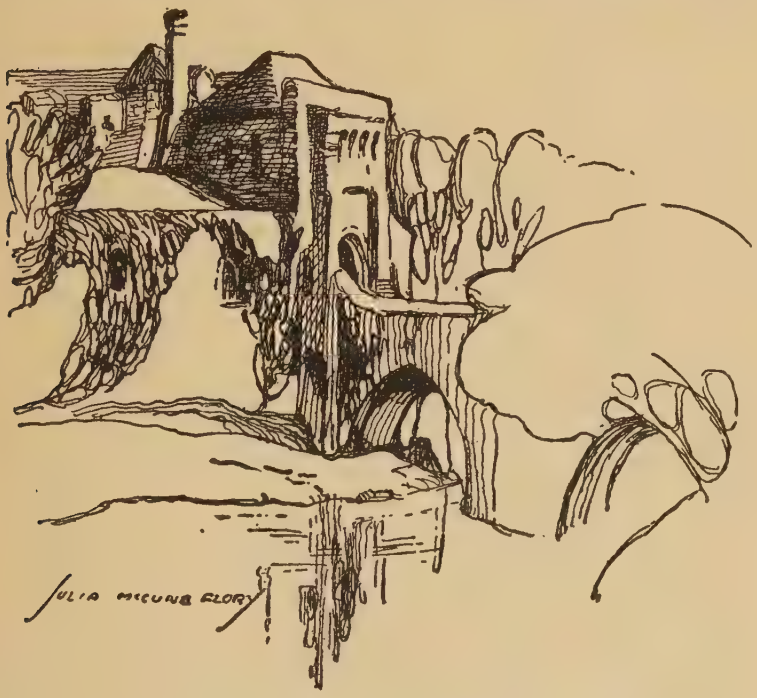
The day had now cleared the country of its early mist and had swept it into hollows where it lay like stranded puddles when the tide runs out. And to walk in England of an early summer morning before the sun has dried the hills is to see a world of green wrapped in translucent gray that rests softly on the sense.

So far I had followed a solitary road; but, as I advanced, a patter of motors overtook me, the first drops of a storm of travel. For it was Saturday and this was the highroad from London to Dover, to Canterbury and the Isle of Thanet where crowds gather at the week-end.

In an hour or so I passed Leeds Castle, and I stood a bit for the prospect of its towers across a meadow. The river Len flows through the park and widens to a moat. In mediæval days the castle was a stronghold of Kent. It was the property of the Queens of England until the days of Edward VI. I wavered whether I might spend an hour in exploration, but the itch of speed was on me and I turned my face to the east and hurried on. And so through Lenham, with the Pilgrims' Way a half mile across the lowland to the north. My own road was of broad macadam, banked at the turns so that motors might run fast.

By noon I had come to Charing, about thirteen miles from Maidstone. It was at Charing that a certain Mary Waters lived who, although she was possessed of but a meager family of sixteen children, had yet a total of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren that ran in her lifetime to three hundred and sixty-seven. For forty-seven years she lived a widow, which must

have been a cruel blow to her ambition to break all records. Had she taken a second husband she could have gathered at a family party half the county round her. But Thomas Fuller lists also among his Worthies



The itch of speed was on me

a certain Hester Temple of even wider progeny. "She had" he writes, "four sons and nine daughters, which lived to be married, and so exceeding multiplied, that this lady saw seven hundred extracted from her body. Reader, I speak within compass," he continues, "and have left myself a reserve, having bought the truth thereof by a wager that I lost." I had never guessed

that Thomas Fuller was a betting man, for I thought his beard too long. And yet my vote resides at Charing with Mary Waters, handicapped by a widowhood of forty-seven years; for she must have been a willing soul while her husband lasted.

At the Charing hotel I bargained for a double portion of vegetable soup and, as I waited, I lay on my back upon a wooden bench inside the tap. So resting, I talked with a barmaid who polished glasses. And I inquired if by chance her great-grandmother was the Widow Waters.

"No," she answered.

"Strange!" I added. "And how did you escape?"

She thought I was fresh and so became quite affable.

"If two men come here later by bus," I said, "and ask for a tramp of my description, tell them I have gone ahead—to Canterbury."

"On foot?" she asked. "It's fifteen miles. I went there once in a char-à-banc. And to Margate, too. My young man and me!"

A far-off look settled on her eyes, as of one who sees a golden vista.

And now the road outside the door was thick with motors and the exodus from London was at its height. There are newer altars for the crowd since the days when St. Thomas gathered pilgrims to his shrine. Were the Wife of Bath to come this way again she would carry her flirtations to the sands of Margate on the Isle of Thanet for a better chance to show her scarlet stockings. I dozed upon the bench in the clank of passing motors until my soup was made.

There is a branching of ways at Charing—the southern road to Dover and the northern to Canterbury and Thanet. I took the more crowded northern way.

And now for fifteen miles I walked in continuous uproar—the closed limousines of the wealthy with a chauffeur in uniform and a trim trunk lashed on the back; light rattling cars on whose running boards cluttered luggage had been strapped, on whose seats red-faced folk sat without their coats with sleeves rolled up; great char-à-bancs and busses; motor cycles with ladies in the tub or perched on a dangerous roost behind; cycling clubs in single file; delivery motors pressed to the service of the crowd.

Did the seed of Banquo stretch forever? For a time I counted the number of these conveyances, but tired when it rose to hundreds. There was much jostling for position, little spurts to gain a place, and always the squawk of horns. For the most part they were silent folk, intent upon the road and the contest to circle a car ahead; but now and then a char-à-banc loosed a song or a voyager turned upon me with a silly grin and shout. At each tavern a dozen cars were stopped for a hasty drink and, as one crowd pushed its way to the bar, another elbowed out and wiped its mouth. And then with a grinding of heavy wheels the great motor resumed its place in the racket of the race.

Times have changed since the Pardoner went this way. Was it not then the pilgrims' custom to beguile the journey with stories? When these ran short they rode forward on their silent mules, lost in holy meditation. Now, upon a holiday, there is not so much space left

on the Margate road as would contain a thimble-full of meditation. The scarlet stockings would have been gray with dust. At every dangerous honk I jumped to the rough pebbles at the side. I held my hat lest a sudden gust blow it from my head. My coat-tails shook with fear of death. I stuffed my ears against the roar.

So all afternoon I plodded on. My legs were weary, but chiefly it was a confusion that tired my head. Through Challok Lees and Molash, under a hill at Chilham where the village escapes the noise and sits at rest far off the road. Hereabouts I laid the dust with ginger beer, then to the road again, past Shalmsford Street and Howfield Farm. Across a bridge I went and skirted the town of Milton, then by the shallow waters of the river Stour. . . .

And now it seemed that the rushing crowd fell off and that I traveled on a mule with many others in a slow procession. There was no roar of any wheel or horn, only a soft padding in the sandy road. The Pardoner sat beside me, bearing a wallet on his saddle. The Merchant, too, the Scrivener and Franklin, and many others with familiar faces went before. For a while I listened to the tales they told, but lost much of the meaning in their outworn phrase. At last stories reached their end and songs were hushed. And so we advanced with padding hoofs that alone broke the silence.

Then from the front there was a sudden outcry. All eyes were lifted. A clamor rose from man to man. "Look!" they cried, with arms upraised. "Look! Yonder are the towers of Canterbury."

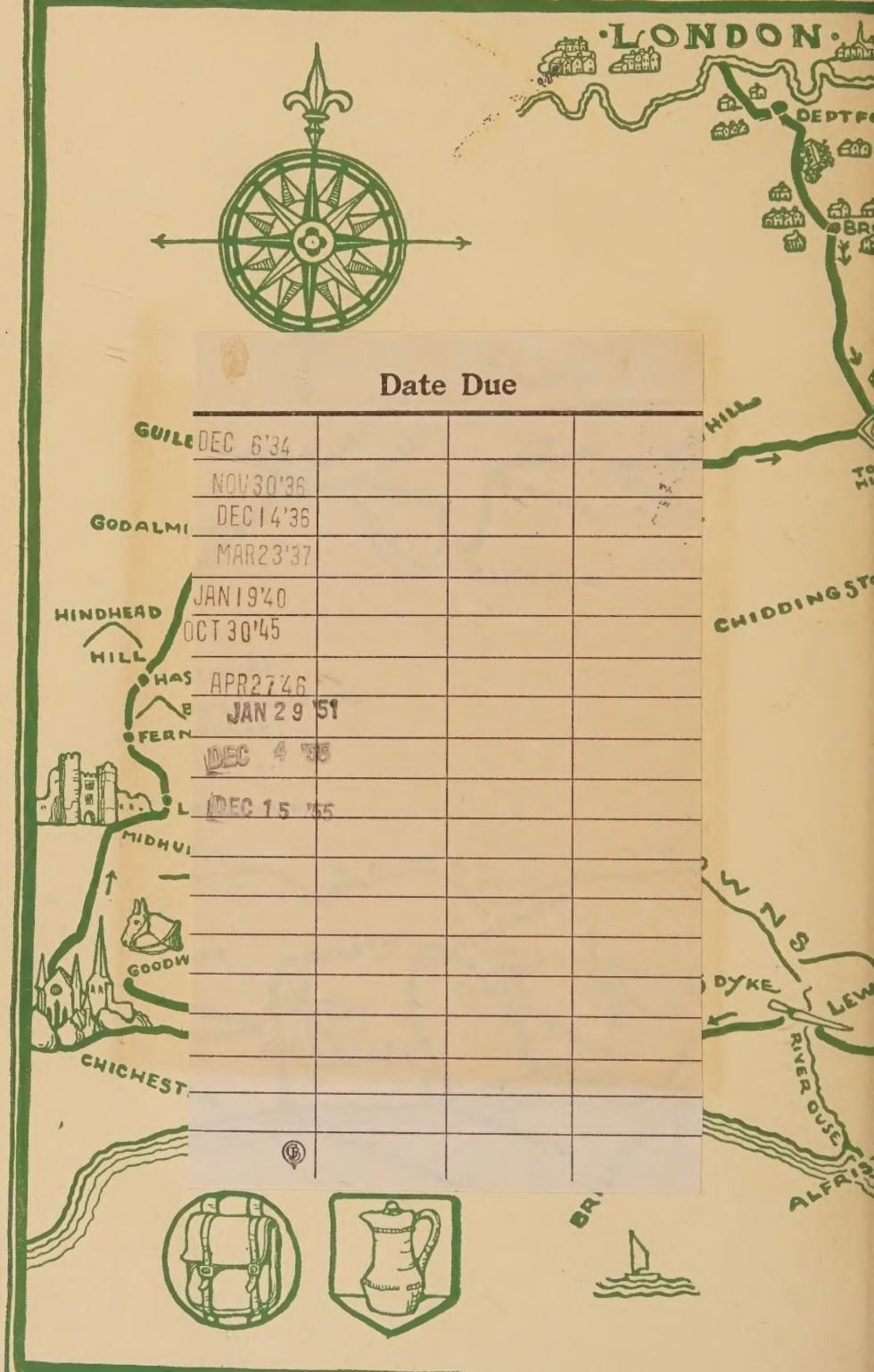
Our pilgrimage has ended. Behind us stretch three hundred miles of English road with its adventure of

Yonder are the towers of Canterbury

valley and of town. Tavern and ocean, church and hill! I have spread them all before you. Darkness leans against my window and scratches at the casement. There comes a memory of lands beyond the sea, where

three men walked and worshiped at the shadowed shrine of Thomas.

As nights grow cold our memory of June quickens into life, and the frosty storage of October preserves in recollection the moons of August and the verdure of the hills. A wind is loose tonight and in the rustling of leaves across the lawn I hear the shouts of summer, its chance and venture, its song and frolic of the night, and those sober voices, also, which lay a shadow in the pattern.



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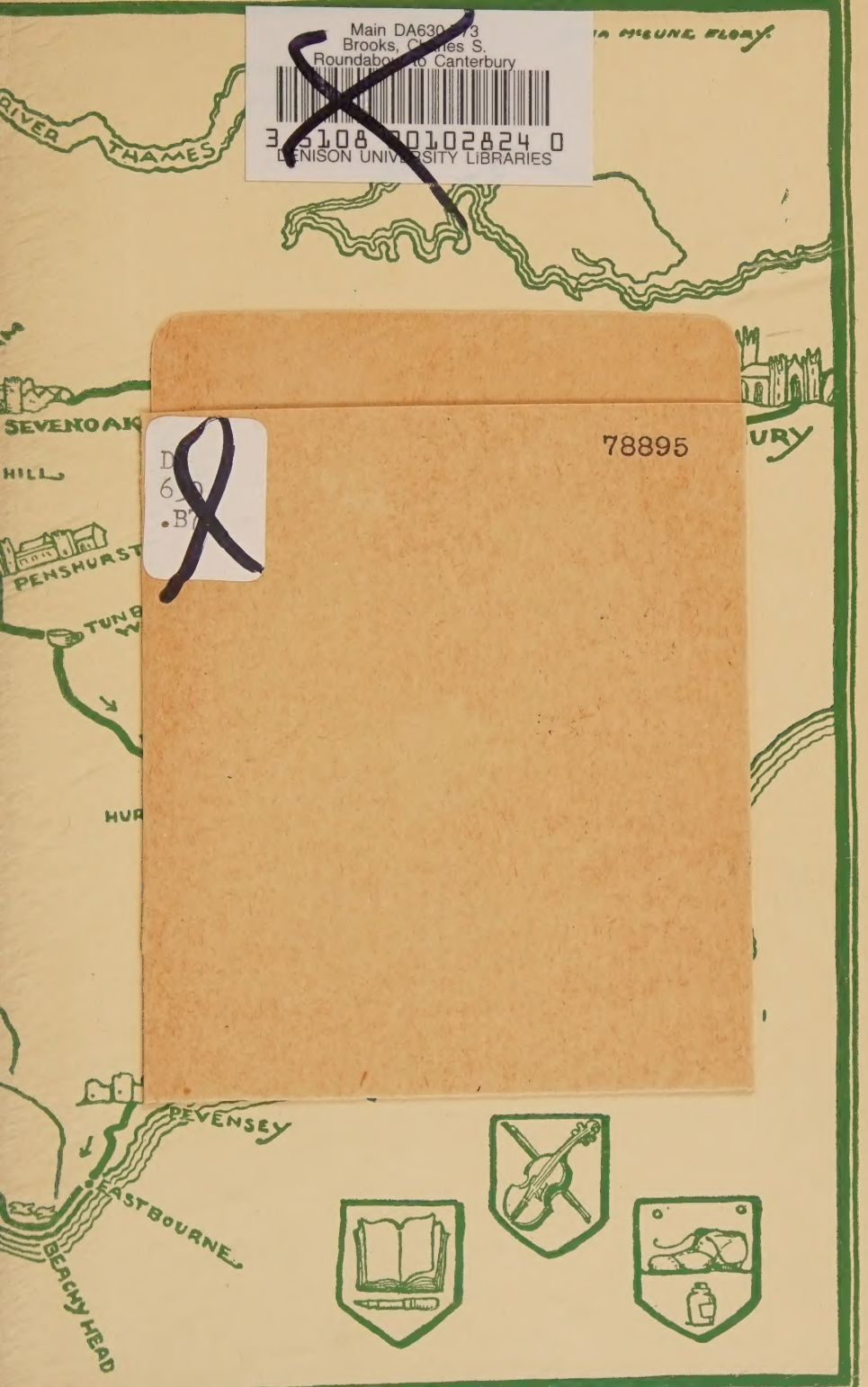
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